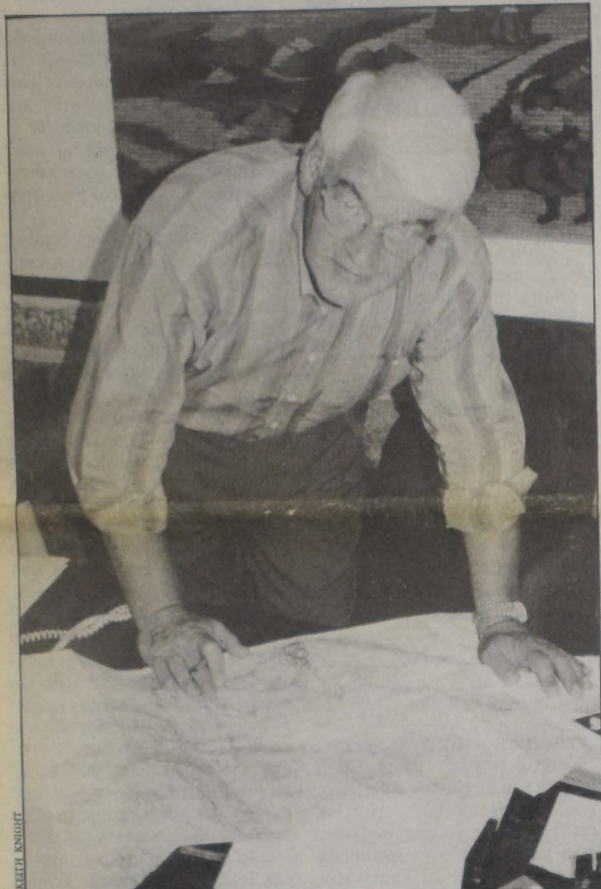


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A Reformed Weekly

Relief groups feel rising tensions in Sudan



Jacob Kramer, of CRWRC, pores over the map of Sudan.

something happens."

World Vision has an international team of workers in Sudan, managing projects such as well-digging, community health and food distribution.

"We will never recklessly endanger our staff, but we pray our vital, life-saving work can continue," says Dave Toycen, president of World Vision Canada. "We do not plan to leave Sudan."

Volatile situation

World Vision's projects in Sudan were not affected by the late-August missile attack in Khartoum. But in June, the Sudanese government bombed a World Vision feeding centre in the city of Panacier as part of its ongoing suppression of rebel groups. Several bombs were

dropped while nurses were feeding mothers and children, and the operation has been temporarily suspended.

In view of rising tensions in East Africa, World Vision fears the Sudanese government might close its borders completely and prohibit relief flights from entering Sudan's air space, Maher reports. Earlier this year, Sudan imposed a relief flight ban for almost two months. But, at least on paper, World Vision is working in Sudan "with the blessing of the Khartoum government," says Maher.

Ongoing civil war

Another problem for aid agencies is the ongoing civil war in Sudan, between the Muslim-dominated north, and the south, where most of Sudan's

Christians live.

Ray Brubacher, director of Mennonite Central Committee's overseas program, says "We feel our workers are less safe," but those workers will stay. MCC has been working since 1973 in Sudan. Relief work has been the major part of this. In the past 10 years alone, MCC has sent \$19 million (Cdn.) in emergency supplies to Sudan. Much of this has been grain sent via the Canadian Food Grains Bank, says Brubacher.

MCC has two teachers working at a university in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital. Brubacher says the MCC workers in Khartoum have not been negatively affected by the bombing in that city. The couple there is Canadian, but he explains that

See AGENCIES page 2...

Free-trade zones spawn dehumanizing 'sweatshops'

Bert Witvoet

SIoux CENTER, Iowa — "Nicaragua is poor ... very poor," says Fred Van Geest. He had known this before he recently traveled there, but he could not understand the full reality and extent of it until he was there.

In June, Van Geest, who teaches political science at Dordt College, spent 10 days in Nicaragua as part of a delegation for a faith-based organization called Witness for Peace. Witness for Peace has arranged trips to countries in Central America since the mid-1980s and seeks to call attention to

See NICARAGUAN page 2...



Fred Van Geest (centre) with a Nicaraguan family in Managua.

Alan Doerksen

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — Terrorist bombings in Kenya and Tanzania and retaliatory strikes by the American military in Sudan and Afghanistan have made foreign relief agencies working in Sudan more cautious. But most are committed to continuing their work in Sudan,

despite possible dangers.

Since the recent bombings in East Africa, World Vision has "stepped up our security awareness in southern Sudan," reports Philip Maher, spokesperson for World Vision Canada. "It's forced us to make sure all our sites are fully secure.... We want to be ready in case



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remembers a
night to forget
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needlepoint story p. 13

News

Agencies become more cautious in Sudan

... continued from page 1

the key point is not whether they are Canadians or Americans, but whether they are trusted in the local community. MCC works closely with two Sudanese groups: the Sudan Council of Churches (based in the northern region) and the New Sudan Council of Churches (based in the south).

MCC, in keeping with its pacifist tradition, opposes all bombings, whatever their source. Says Brubacher, "We deplore bombings. We don't believe in violent retaliation."

CRC workers not affected

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) has been helping with food distribution in Sudan for about five months, and its work has not been affected by recent tensions in the region, says Jacob Kramer, CRWRC Canada's government relations worker. Much of CRWRC's work is in southern Sudan, which is not controlled by the Sudanese government, he explains. No CRWRC workers have been asked to leave the country.

In Sudan, CRWRC has been working with MCC and the

Episcopal Church of Sudan in a joint response to the needs of starving people in the south. CRWRC has been buying food in Uganda and trucking it across the border into Sudan.

Kramer says CRWRC's food distribution is "very well controlled," unlike the World Food Program, which drops food from planes. CRWRC's food program involves "wet-feeding," in which sorghum and wheat flour is brought into an area, local women get together to cook it and local people share and eat the cooked food.

The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace works in Sudan through two sister agencies: Caritas (an international Catholic relief network) and the U.S.-based Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Recent problems in East Africa have "heightened the level of danger" for relief workers in Sudan, says Jack Panozzo, communications officer for Development and Peace. "It adds to the already dangerous situation." Panozzo expects Catholic relief workers in Sudan will "keep a low profile."

But Panozzo asserts that relief workers in southern Sudan "were just as much at risk before the bombing as they are now....

The people who do that kind of work are heroic."

CRS has a team of international workers in southern Sudan, but Caritas has mainly Sudanese workers in the northern region.

In late August, Development and Peace sent \$170,000 to help victims of the civil war and the famine it has created in southern Sudan, reports Panozzo. The emergency funds will help meet some of the needs of thousands of displaced persons and refugees. For more than 20 years, Development and Peace has made emergency grants to aid programs for the Sudanese people.

Anglican 'business as usual'

The Anglican Church of Canada's Primate's World Relief and Development Fund has been financially supporting relief work in southern Sudan, through the New Sudan Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches. The fund's money is used primarily for food aid, shelter and medicine.

Recent violence hasn't had any immediate effect on partner agencies in Sudan, says Rob Shropshire, development team



Franklin Graham

co-ordinator for the Primate's Fund. "The indications are this will be business as usual." But he cautions that "business as usual" means "we're already working in a country at war," with the additional problems of a famine and human rights abuses.

Bombings justified, says Graham

Dr. Clive Calver, president of World Relief, the relief and development arm of the [U.S.] National Association of Evangelicals, of which the Christian Reformed Church is a member, worries about the needs of the southern Sudanese. "While we

understand the rationale given by the United States government for its actions, we plead on behalf of the 2.6 million people at risk of starvation in southern Sudan, that their needs be taken into account as well," says Calver.

Relief may be restricted

He adds, "There is an awful danger that in retaliation, the government of Sudan in the north may restrict humanitarian flights delivering food and medical supplies. The people of southern Sudan should not once again be victims of governmental movements beyond their control."

But Franklin Graham, head of the international aid agency Samaritan's Purse, said he's "seen the results of man's inhumanity toward man, and specifically the results of random and state-sponsored terrorism."

Graham spoke on Aug. 2, after returning from a 10-day trip to Kenya and Sudan. "In Nairobi I saw the deadly results of terrorism that is targeting Americans, and in southern Sudan I saw the terrible toll of a radical Islamic government that has declared a holy war against many of its own people."

Graham asserted, "While we regret whenever [the U.S.] government must resort to the use of military power, my recent experiences in Africa make me realize the importance of government actions that make the world a safer place and protect innocent people from brutality and senseless suffering. I urge all Americans to support our leaders in the fight against terrorism."

Pray for workers

Missions expert Mark Kelly, editor of *Advance*, urged Christians to pray for missionaries who are facing increased danger, especially those working with fledgling ministries which may be jeopardized by evacuation. "Pray for Christian workers who must decide what God would have them do in the face of such danger," he said. "Ask God to give them wisdom and insight into his will for them. Stand in prayer against the dark spiritual forces at work behind the scenes in this conflict. Pray for believers in many countries who will face persecution.... Ask God to glorify his name in the midst of this conflict."

(See related story on page 9.)

Nicaraguan workers 'packed like sardines'

... continued from page 1

poverty, oppression and injustice in these countries, especially as it relates to American foreign policy.

How poor is Nicaragua? In the Western hemisphere, it is the poorest country next to Haiti. Per capita income is around \$400 a year. Most estimates have over half the population being unemployed. But, these are just numbers, the human reality is much more disturbing.

While in Nicaragua, Van Geest stayed with a family he described as "literally dirt poor" in a fairly typical setting in Managua, the capital city: "Their small tin shanty, no larger than a small room in the average North American home, had a dirt floor, which when it rained, would inevitably become a muddy mess. Hygienic and sanitary conditions were appalling; I found them difficult to tolerate for three nights, but Nicaraguans live in these conditions permanently.

"The cockroach-laced latrine offered no privacy, no comfort,

and surely must have been a haven for diseases waiting to infect inhabitants of this community (many of the children I saw were regularly ill). The road in front of the shanty was muddy with streams of water flowing, contaminated with sewage and garbage. Dogs and roosters (and probably rats) strolled through the streets, as did barefooted children."

One might think that the woman in the household where Van Geest stayed was poor because she didn't have a job. In actual fact, she had one of the better paying jobs in Nicaragua, at which she usually worked ten hours a day for six days a week.

The Witness for Peace delegation visited the place where she worked — an area in Managua called the free trade zone, which employs about 25,000 Nicaraguans in around thirty factories dedicated to stitching clothes together for export to the United States. The free trade zone is a very large, fenced off, heavily guarded area into which a sea of humanity marches every morn-

ing before seven o'clock.

Most of the factories are owned by Taiwanese companies although six of the factories are American owned. The delegation visited one of these.

A fair wage?

This is how Van Geest described the scene: "There were countless workers, mostly young women, hunched over sewing machines, packed in next to each other like sardines, working away like ants in the most oppressive heat and humidity I have felt. I saw them sew in the U.S. dollar price tag and the 'Faded Glory' label on these particular items. We were told that companies like Wal-Mart and K-Mart buy fabric from places like Bangladesh and Pakistan and bring it to these sweatshops in Nicaragua.

"Then, they buy the finished product from the Taiwanese or American company that operates the sweatshops. Most of the sweatshops are privately held companies and we could not obtain good information on the

amount of profit they made. I suspect it is a lot. Out of the 18 dollars you might pay for a shirt, you can bet that the worker actually making it gets no more than a penny or two. Somebody must collect the rest somewhere along the way."

Companies that operate in the free trade zone are given free rent from the government and have to pay no taxes, allowing them to retain 100 per cent of their profit, explains Van Geest. He considers these "sweatshops" the worst type of foreign investment as they have no technological or other economic spin-offs for the Nicaraguan economy.

Van Geest mentioned several labor and human rights abuses in the factories: workers do not have basic health and safety protections, some are exposed to toxic chemicals and workers are routinely threatened with being fired if they think about organizing in a union.

(See page 20 for Van Geest's reflections on his experience.)

News

Ethics centre addresses moral problems in business

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — Ethical problems in a company can lead to its downfall if they are allowed to grow unchecked, says Deborah Thompson. She gives the example of Bre-X, which collapsed after a gold find in Indonesia was declared to be false late last year.

Thompson, vice-president of Lute & Co., spoke about how to identify and solve such ethical problems in a recent speech to the Canadian Centre for Ethics & Corporate Policy.

"Dubious behavior tends to start in rather innocuous ways, for example, something as mundane as padding expense accounts," explained Thompson. "But if not detected, it can escalate to another level of deceit, and so on up the ladder. I believe that if we can introduce the right deterrents, the challenge of finding the 'apple biters' among us wouldn't be nearly so daunting." She referred to employees who give in to business-related temptations as 'apple-biters.'

Bre-X was time-bomb

Last year, Thompson wrote a book called *Greed*, published the same day it was announced that the Bre-X company's discovery of gold in Busang, Indonesia was a fraud. She agrees with Richard Finlay, chairman of the Centre of Corporate and Public Governance, that one of Bre-X's biggest flaws was "a failure of corporate governance. Of Bre-X's board of six, only two were independent.... The Toronto Stock Exchange's guidelines for publicly traded companies call for a majority of outside, independent directors.... With its insider board of directors, poor disclosure records, inside trading patterns and flagrant descriptions of the size and quality of the ore deposits, Bre-X was a time-bomb waiting to go off. But those who could have diffused it heard only the siren song of fast money and not



Elizabeth Loweth

the tick-tick-tick of impending ruin."

Honesty still best

Thompson and her colleagues at Lute & Co. recently wrote a guidebook on how to speak to the media in good and bad times for a Canadian-based multinational company. She was impressed with the company's ethical standards, commenting, "What we found to be particularly encouraging is that senior management of this publicly traded firm were adamant that we convey to employees the message that honesty is the best policy. This is not simply lip service. This is a company that does not lie and does not cheat. The firm is dedicated to its customers, employees and shareholders, and senior management recognize the value in setting standards. If you set standards, people will try to reach them. And employees will say to themselves, 'I can't act in an illegal way because my company doesn't do that.'"

Thompson was one of a series

of speakers on topics related to business ethics who have spoken at the Toronto-based Canadian Centre for Ethics & Corporate Policy. The centre was started up 10 years ago by the King-Bay Chaplaincy, a non-denominational Christian chaplaincy based in downtown Toronto.

Explores, promotes ethics

The centre's mission is to encourage organizations to take into account the ethical dimensions of making business decisions and developing policies and practices. It explores and promotes the role of ethics in the conduct of all business.

Although started by a Christian agency, the ethics centre does not label itself as Christian. However, the Anglican Church of Canada is one of its main supporters, and Elizabeth Loweth, the executive director, is married to an Anglican clergyman. And one member of the board of directors is Frank Brisbin, a retired United Church minister.

Many businesses also support the centre, such as the Bank of Montreal, the Royal Bank, Ontario Hydro and the Prudential Insurance Co.

"The centre is fundamentally a centre for discussion or a forum," explains Loweth. She sees many of Canadian society's ethics as having their origin in Christianity. "The cultural norms are usually determined by the [main] faith," she says. "The dominant culture at the present time is Judeo-Christian." Loweth feels there is a growing concern about ethics in both the religious and secular parts of

our society.

The centre offers a wide range of services to encourage better ethics in the business world. Through its lecture series, seminars and CEO roundtables, the centre promotes public discussion of ethical issues. The centre

also responds to requests from corporations and other organizations seeking assistance in reaching ethical policy decisions. Also at the centre is a collection of books, magazines and videos available for use by the community.

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Correction:

In our August 21 issue, on page 2, we listed an incorrect address for Wycliffe Bible Translators Canada. Wycliffe moved its headquarters one year ago. The new address is: **4316 10th Street NE, Calgary, AB, T2E 6K3.** We regret the error.

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Editorial

How much faith do you have in human achievements?

Isn't it strange? The more human beings seem to be in control of life on earth, the more things go wrong. Or is there a necessary correlation here? We have developed intricate technological wonders like the computer, the Internet, fibre optics, DNA testing, the cloning of animals, space probes — but the newspapers tell us that things are not well in this world.

El Nino has produced violent or unusual weather patterns this year which have affected the lives of millions of people, to say nothing about animals and habitats. Think only of the flooding of the Yangtze River in China, which forced the evacuation of millions and caused the drowning of hundreds. Or consider the tsunami that hit Papua New Guinea July 17 and wiped out dozens of villages, killing thousands of inhabitants.

Economically, the world could hardly have been stormier than it has been this year. The so-called "Asian Flu" has plunged Asian markets into steep decline, and now the Russian ruble is in free fall. We don't know what the political implications are for the world, but

it seems to point to instability and perhaps a decline in democracy.

The overall impact on human lives is, of course, devastating. Seeing television images of worried people in Russia lining up in front of closed banks should disturb all of us. What are these poor people, many of them pensioners on fixed incomes, going to do once winter sets in?

A theory for everything

How can all this be when our knowledge about the universe is increasing exponentially, day by day, hour by hour? I'm reminded of an interview Hana Gartner had with Stephen Hawking, the eminent physicist from Britain. Gartner asked him if he had faith. "I have faith in reason," said Hawking. "One day we will develop a theory for everything. We will know how the universe came into being."

The claim sounded outrageous to me for a number of reasons. First of all, it seemed to underestimate the complexity of the universe; and secondly, it seemed to place too much trust in human theorizing. I can just hear the voice of God to Job, now redirected toward Stephen Hawking: "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand.... Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place...?"

But even if people like Hawking were to succeed in developing a theory for everything, I thought, how does that really help us in getting to a full understanding of everything? To understand something is more than having a theory about it — it means you *stand under* it and are able to control it. How does having a theory for everything solve our greatest human predicament of evil and suffering, for example? Can a theory for everything stop the Russian economy from crashing or a tsunami from pounding our coasts? Does such a theory prevent the abuse of an innocent child?

Our place in the universe

If there is one thing we need to do in the face of all these terrible developments in the world, it is to confess our total dependence on the Lord: "Lord, we are so small, compared to you. Even collectively, all six billion of us, we are like ants to you. Yes, you have 'crowned us with glory and honor'. You have given us good minds and strong bodies, and we have been able to do great things. But how can this compare to the power and majesty of you, the Master Builder and Great Protector?"

Psalm 8 offers a wonderful "theory for everything" when we want to understand a bit the oxymoron of our lowly but elevated place in the universe. The humble confession "What is man that you are mindful of him?" is quickly followed by the amazing conclusion: "You put everything under his feet."

But if that complexity were not great enough, we human beings confuse the picture even more by adding the not-so-performance-enhancing feature of sin. We diminish the "glory and honor" with which God crowned us by polluting our minds with junk, poisoning our brains with drugs and pumping our muscles with androstenedione. Psalm 8 no longer accounts for all that happens in the world. Even *it* cannot be the theory for everything.

I'm reminded of a poem I wrote back in my college days:

*Man is the undisputed heir
of Adam's sin and Eve's despair:
a labyrinth of human pride,
that keeps the scholar occupied.*

How we have messed things up with our inability to live up to the expectations of God for his creatures! Isn't *that* why the more we control things, the worse life on earth gets? Yet we lose sight of this all too easily. We are so quickly impressed with our own achievements.

Who made Dolly?

This was driven home to me again when, this summer, one of my sons pointed out to me the irony between William Blake's poem "The Lamb" and the cloning of the Scottish sheep Dolly. In the poem, Blake has a little child ask a lamb: "Little lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?" The answer is that "he [who] calls himself a Lamb" is the one who made the little lamb, as well as the child. What would have been the answer if a child had asked Dolly, when she was still a lamb, that question?

We *should* say, the answer has not changed; the scientists are working with materials created by God. But is this how most people in our society perceive it? Do they thank God for Dolly?

Our world seems hell-bent on trying to solve its own problems without turning to God — the patient, loving God who longs to keep us from harm.

In the meantime, we who know where our help comes from need never despair. There is a magnificent verse in the Bible that is so complete in its statement of hope and trust that I am at a loss to know a more appropriate verse of comfort for any time of danger: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing." There are Christians all over the world, finding themselves in the most dire circumstances, who really believe this confession. Say it to yourself a few times. Cut it up into two parts and emphasize different words each time as you say them. There is a richness here that surpasses all understanding. It may not be a *theory*, but it certainly is a *remedy* for everything. **BW**

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Letters

IRM fiasco still needs answers

I have just read and re-read the open synodical letter to members of the Christian Reformed Church on the IRM fiasco. Let us not put too fine a point on matters: It is unfortunate that synod chose to meet such a stunning example of financial and managerial incompetence with a letter which constitutes little more than an exercise in public relations.

Let us parse the letter for a moment.

1. *We are told that there is little hope for any substantial recovery of the investments lost.*

Nevertheless, we are told that many hours went into the effort to protect the institutional and private investments and we are asked to pray for those working diligently to recover the losses. Asking someone to pray comes all too easy. For what are we to pray? A miracle? An act for penance on the part of the presumably Christian IRM executives that might involve their switching places with the investors they have now impoverished?

2. *We are told that synod is confident that the appropriate information is being communicated, that nothing is being withheld and that the overture for an independent review committee is unnecessary.*

But just what is meant by appropriate communication? It seems to me the laity have been told next to nothing of

substance. Consider our collective ignorance on these issues:

Were the IRM books misleading?

Was Home Missions less than vigilant in perusing the IRM books?

Why did Home Missions continue to blithely invest monies when there was no reasonable prospect of repayment?

Have managers and directors of ministries been terminated in respect of a loss of over \$15 million (Cdn.)

Has the church been sued? Is the church suing IRM directors and officers?

Were any CRC employees or others the beneficiaries of IRM largess, including travel to these California properties?

Precisely how could the conflicts of interest and synodical guidelines on investments been flouted without someone noticing?

How could the Home Missions board (consisting of 50 plus persons paid at great expense to gather and oversee matters twice annually) not have in place a competent investment subcommittee?

Is it asking for too much that an independent committee be struck to examine all these issues and to inform the church?

3. *We ought to support our deacons in their efforts to assist individual investors who have been financially devastated.*

On first blush, this is a remarkable suggestion, as it will surprise many to

know that diaconal outreach now embraces investors whose personal portfolios go awry. Why is IRM any different from losses in the share value of, say, General Motors? Or does this suggestion imply that the church's participation in IRM might have given the imprimatur of the denomination to its stock and debt instruments, thereby misleading individual investors as well?

4. *Finally, we are invited to address concerns to Dr. Peter Borgdorff, who happens to have been the executive director of ministries during the largest financial scandal ever to hit our denomination and its ministries.*

Finally, words fail me.

With respect, the synodical missive communicates nothing new. It, in fact, insults the intelligence and belittles the concerns expressed by both CRC members and the denominational paper [*The Banner*] whose editor called for such an independent review prior to synod being convened.

We all know the pressures on the clergy to conform to the politically correct and safe positions. There is little to gain from challenging those who operate the church on a day-to-day basis. Still, was there no leader at synod who stood to say that the trustees cannot examine themselves? That accountability means demanding and accepting the resignations of those who claim to be managers and directors? That it is insulting to throw investors onto the diaconal rolls? That, contrary to the claim set forth in this letter, the entire IRM matter remains clouded?

Certain retired clergy have written in these pages that synod has effectively devolved into a rubber stamp of, and cheerleader for, the bureaucracy and its various actions and ministries. The

handling of the IRM matter justifies their concerns, and then some.

I trust the investors will ignore synod's suggestion to call up the deacons for a handout and consult instead with litigation counsel.

John A. Tamming
Owen Sound, Ont.

Not even Gretzky could transcend time zones

In a recent sports column, Tim Antonides described how people grew bored and suffered fan-malaise during the final days of the Edmonton Oilers dynasty. He recalled how the Northlands Coliseum crowd reacted with almost a collective shrug with each goal by Kurri or Gretzky.

Just one problem. Gretzky wasn't even with the team during the end of their great run. He was traded on Aug. 9, 1988, in an eight player/\$15 million trade with the Los Angeles Kings — a deal which *Sports Illustrated* called, at the time, the biggest trade in the history of sports. And while Gretzky was playing in the land of the beautiful people, the Oilers won the Stanley Cup without him in 1990, and then came to withering a few wins of making the finals again in 1991, before falling to the then Minnesota North Stars.

It's important to stay accurate, and not let romantic nostalgia cloud the facts. Though his nickname is "The Great One," even Gretzky couldn't score from a time zone away.

Rob Janssens
Burlington, Ont.

Who is this happy couple?



Nine years ago, we formed a new Christian Reformed congregation in Dixon's Corners (Brinston, Ont.). Since one of our needs was a library, we made an appeal for books. We got swamped with books, mostly in Dutch.

One big box came from Holland Christian Homes in Brampton, Ont. In one of those books, I found a picture, which I'm enclosing. I have asked and asked if someone can identify the couple in it, but without success. On the back of the picture it says that the couple celebrated their 12-1/2th wedding

anniversary in July 1958 [celebrating certain half-year anniversaries is an old Dutch custom]. That was 40 years ago.

Could you publish this picture so that either the couple or their children can claim it? I'm at the end of my trying.

Joan Zandbergen
Brinston, Ont.

Note:

The picture is now at the CC office and can be claimed by its rightful owners.
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Education

Calvin receives foundation gifts for two new centres

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The two largest gifts in the history of Calvin College will finance construction of two major new centres. A new centre for communication arts and sciences and a new conference centre will be built with contributions from the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation and the Edgar and Elsa Prince Foundation — each of which has committed \$10 million to the projects over the next five years.

Both centres — tentatively named the De Vos centre for Communication Arts and Sciences and the Prince Conference Center — will sit side-by-side and be part of an integrated complex of buildings Calvin plans to construct east of the East Beltline and north of Burton Street, beginning in late 1999 or early 2000.

The centres will be the first two phases in the construction of a larger complex that may eventually include a new performing arts facility.

Calvin's Communication Arts and Sciences Department, ranked among the best in the U.S., will take a leap forward with the new centre, which calls for facilities for TV and radio training and programming and Internet media applications.

The new conference centre will feature meeting and dining rooms, a large auditorium and guest rooms. It will focus on academic conferences involving Christian scholarship and Christians in the professions, Christian ministry groups (such as those which might come to the Center for Communications for training) and church groups.

The joy of discipline

Our B.Ed. students complete two extended *practica* in the course of their teacher education program. In their first year they have a semester of college courses and then they experience nine mini-courses in curriculum with various master teachers before we send them out to practice teach in elementary/junior high classrooms.

In the second year they return to the college classroom for another semester of courses before they complete their program with a full term of practice teaching. At the conclusion of each practice teaching session the students return to the college for a variety of seminars.

For the first-year students, the topics of the seminars are determined by the pressing concerns they wish to explore before going into a second year of studying and teaching. Inevitably, classroom discipline is one of the topics they want to know more about.

Many of them lament the fact that we have no specific three-credit course on discipline for them. They feel the need to spend 13 weeks in a college classroom learning how to discipline and manage a classroom of students even though they all agree that the best preparation for teaching is the practice of teaching, and that their semester course work is often too theoretical to be useful.

No infallible manual exists

Of course, what these student teachers really want is a manual which will direct them infallibly to meet any difficulties in motivating, disciplining and managing a classroom of children.

However, the desire to learn, discuss and explore issues of classroom discipline is no longer limited to first-year student teachers. At the beginning of this new school year, I was asked to address two different Christian school systems on the topic of discipline.

One would think that with the combined wisdom of years of experience among more than 40 teachers, there would be no need to bring in a college professor who teaches adults without discipline and classroom management difficulties. After all, it has been almost 20 years since I last experienced the woes of prodding, correcting, ordering and encouraging 30 children in an overcrowded classroom day after day.

But maybe what these seasoned teachers desire is not so much a student-teacher manual as it is a framework that will enable them to understand the nature of discipline issues in their classroom. Theories frame practices; practices mold theories.

Culture influences methods

And the theories and practices of classroom discipline are very much embedded in our contemporary culture. In preparing for their new school year, one of the schools' teachers read Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the*

Pedagogeries



Alyce Oosterhuis

Selves of Adolescent Girls. Mary Pipher is a psychologist who writes extensively about the many teenage girls who come to her in therapy for problems of addiction, depression, eating disorders, self-mutilation and self-identity.

As a self-described humanistic social learning therapist, Mary Pipher analyzes family systems, media values, peer relations and teenagers' self-images to find ways to encourage healing and peace amidst the brokenness of students' lives. And in contrasting her rural small town youth with those of large urban-centre youth 30 years later, she underscores the fact that our present culture of dissonant voices in the church, family, media, music and peer relations, contributes to a world of disorder, mismanagement, self-hatred and undisciplined being.

Having cake, eating it too

Mary Pipher concludes with a plea for a culture in "which there is the structure and security of the '50s and the tolerance for diversity and autonomy of the 1990s."

Unfortunately, it is precisely this kind of conclusion that has made discipline a burning issue in many of our Christian school communities. Principals are organizing sessions on discipline not because so many of their teachers are having problems with discipline and classroom management, but because many of the parents and community members lament the fact that the discipline in the '90s schools is no longer the control of the '50s.

Teachers want the theories to frame their understanding of the cultural changes that have had such impact on their classrooms since they began 20 years ago. What brought joy in past generations now brings boredom! What motivated youth in the '70s now seems to encourage its opposite. The culture we aimed to transform when we set up our Christian schools has transformed us!

How can we redirect the cultural influences to build up rather than to destroy?

A small beginning: to discipline, to direct to follow as in disciple, must begin with joy. This joy is expressed in seeing God in his human creatures, our children, in their exuberance, creativity, uniqueness, wonder and laughter. And when this laughter is stilled, our first question cannot be: "How can I regain control and order?" but it ought to be: "How can we restore joy in the classroom?"

Alyce Horzenberg Oosterhuis teaches education and psychology at The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta.

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Book Review

Poignant contemplations from a grandfather to his granddaughter fighting for life

Marian Van Til

Dear Zoe

Letters to My Grandchild on the Wonder of Life

By Max De Pree

Grand Rapids, Mich.: Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998 (Eerdmans ed.), ISBN 0-8028-4592-4. 105 pp. Softcover. \$11 (US).

In *Dear Zoe* we readers are allowed to look quietly over the shoulder of 64-year-old grandfather Max De Pree as he muses to his tiny, dangerously premature granddaughter about her early perilous journey into life; about how God's faithful hand guided them through that

of living three to five days). And through this crucible, that faith became even more solid.

Looking in on a cherished relationship

Max De Pree, who lives in Holland, Mich., is a member of one of the Reformed (RCA)

his willingness to be vulnerable in the presence of a caring and dependable God.

The faith that shines through here is not without its questions; but the questions, far from undermining De Pree's belief, spur him to even deeper commitment to his God, and a profound ability to pray and listen to God's voice.

Yet there is never a hint of a kind of phariseical flaunting of piety. And De Pree has a knack for being extremely personal (including naming the many real people in this drama with their own names) without causing himself, nor those people, nor us his readers, the least embarrassment. The reader never feels: *I don't want to know that; or You shouldn't be telling us this.* Instead, we feel honored to be able to share in this unique, Christian relationship between grandfather and granddaughter and their God. And we feel De Pree has wisdom to impart to us.

While trying to make sense of God's ways for his world, this book rejoices in many things: tiny human beings made in God's image; Christian marriage; the bonds between members of the Body of Christ; the miracle that daily, "normal" life really is; and, zealously, in "grandfatherhood."

De Pree had seven other grandchildren when Zoe was born, but, especially since he also had to act for a while as surrogate father to Zoe, he developed a profound and particular bond with her that will no doubt be life long. (He is now going on 75 and Zoe is a spunky 10-year-old. She was six when De Pree first wrote these letters, which he agreed to have published in a limited edition by The Shepherd Foundation; two years later, HarperSanFrancisco

published a hardcover edition, and this Eerdmans edition is the first, very affordable paperback edition).

One need not be a grand-

parent, a parent, or even to have been a premature baby to enjoy and profit from this compelling little volume.

Excerpt from *Dear Zoe*

In the following passage Max De Pree contemplates the possibility that Zoe will be handicapped, both mentally and physically:

Zoe, I love you so much that I'm embarrassed to tell you that I've been thinking about perfection.

When you are an adult, I think you should visit a neonatology unit to see what you looked like. As Grandma explains to friends, you seem to have all your "parts." Whether or not they work is another matter. Of course since no one can see inside, those "parts" are a considerable unknown.

What I can see and hear is the paraphernalia of technology. Your size, the constant attention you receive, the tubes and monitors, the lights and alarms don't seem to me to be responses to perfection. Also I'm a bit embarrassed to mention the word because it prompts me to wonder if deep inside I feel I have certain rights in regard to the condition of people who are special to me. And that I'm qualified to judge that condition.

Do I feel somewhere that only other families ought to know heartache over perfection? Is this something I need to discover about myself? Is it selfish? Or is there something here I just don't understand?

Trying to be rational, I looked up "perfect" in my Webster's dictionary. Most of the definitions are not surprising: "Being entirely without fault or defect, satisfying all requirements, corresponding to an ideal standard or abstract concept, legally valid."

But then I come to "faithfully reproducing the original." As a follower of Jesus, I am stunned. What does it mean to be made in the image of God? For years as a manager, I have pondered that question in relation to the diversity of groups and organizations. Now you and Webster give it a new twist.

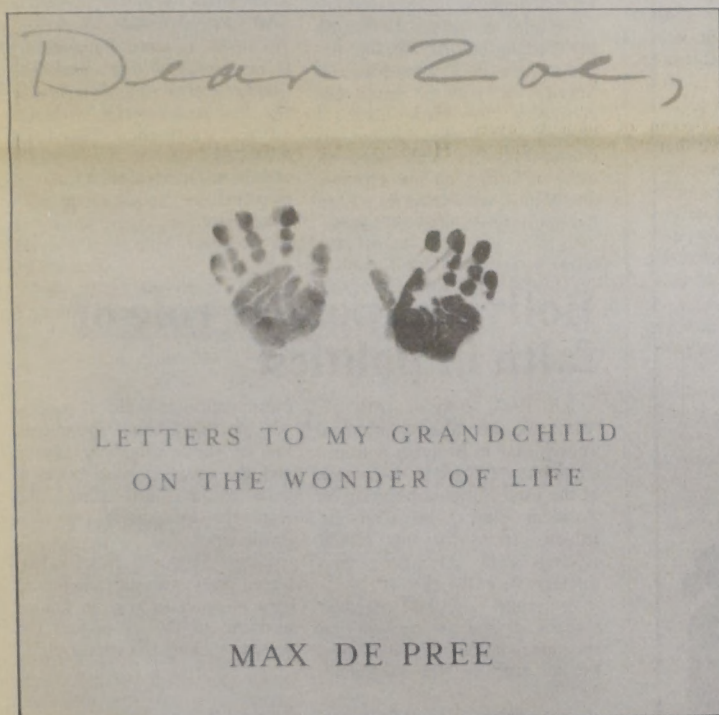
As I look at you in your isolette, I find myself suppressing the question, as though there is a great moral fault in me that lets this thing rise to the surface. But how am I to ignore it? Already in a matter of a few days, I'm in love with you. You are part of my family. You belong here. The two of us are already intimate. Somehow I have to believe the Lord will give me an answer. I hope he also will help me to cope with the implications.

In an epilogue, written when Zoe is six, De Pree takes a look back, tells her a little about her mom and pastor-stepdad's courtship and marriage, and tentatively answers her possible question about why he waited so long to reveal these letters to her, aware of his vulnerability:

I'm not sure I know. Perhaps I couldn't risk disclosing my feelings during those tender days. Perhaps I wasn't sure I should share them with anyone, especially you. How can I predict what these letters will say to you when you are fifteen or thirty? Even now, I wonder if I have the right to express such inner anguish and joy.

Going back to his musings on perfection and the image of God, he then sums it all up:

Zoe, I am at peace concerning both you and me because I see now that perfection lies in the eye of the Beholder. Love, Grandpa."



treacherous time; and about, as the subtitle says, "the wonder of life," even in the midst of such trauma.

Through faith, Nancy, Max's daughter, cherished her unborn child even though her failing marriage had just come to its sad conclusion. Through faith, Nancy named her four-month premature baby Zoe — "life" in Greek. Through faith Nancy's parents, sisters and church community "prayed without ceasing" for Zoe's life (doctors gave her a five to 10 per cent chance

churches there and has been chairperson of the board of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. De Pree is the former CEO and current board chair of Herman Miller, Inc., and during his career was lauded by *Forbes*, *Fortune* and *The Wall Street Journal* for an unusual combination of qualities: he was described as "one of the most sensitive and successful executives in business."

We see that sensitivity in these poignant letters to Zoe, and we understand its source:

Church

Prayer Day for persecuted church anticipates thousands of churches in 130 countries

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (ASSIST) "It seems appropriate that one of the least observed issues of the church becomes the subject of one of the largest prayer rallies in the world," observed Steve Haas, President of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Haas serves as the U.S. co-ordinator for the International Day of

Prayer for the Persecuted Church scheduled for November 15 in an estimated 100,000 churches worldwide.

Last year's event drew over 60,000 churches and church service observances in 115 countries, drawing attention to the plight of persecuted Christians worldwide.

Noted scholar and human rights monitor Paul Marshall, former senior member in political theory at Toronto's Institute for Christian Studies (ICS), estimates that roughly 200 million Christians face persecution (physical abuse, family separation, incarceration, and martyrdom) and 350 million face

discrimination and restriction as a result of their Christian faith.

'With us in our dark night'

A national service in the U.S. is scheduled for the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., on November 15. Brother Andrew, founder and CEO of Open Doors International, will speak, in addition to several international guests who have had first-hand experience of persecution for their faith.

"We expect leadership from across the faith spectrum, as well as government, religious freedom and the private sector," stated Serge Duss, chairperson for the national service event. "The congregation [at National Presbyterian] was deeply impacted by the International Day of Prayer last year and is very excited about being involved."

"While we gather leadership in Washington for the International Day of Prayer National Service, it will be most encouraging to know that ... around the world millions of Christ-followers will join in unity in lifting up our brothers and sisters who share our faith but not our freedom," said Haas.

"I've talked with Christians in a number of beleaguered communities of faith worldwide, and the news of this massive prayer and advocacy effort displays support that means more to them than we can imagine. As one believer in Egypt told me upon his release from prison for his faith, 'It has given rise to a kind of holy boldness for us, you are standing with us in our dark night.'"

To obtain more information on how you or your congregation can be involved in the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, a 1998 Resource Kit has been created. The kit includes a 1998 video, 20-page four-color magazine, four-color prayer map, leadership sheets for church leadership, brochure, and choral arrangement of the new release "Let's Pray" by Alan Moore.

The kit is available for \$15 (US) by calling toll-free 888/LetsPra (538-7772). A website is also available with updated information on the persecuted church and ways for individuals and churches to be involved. www.persecuted-church.org.

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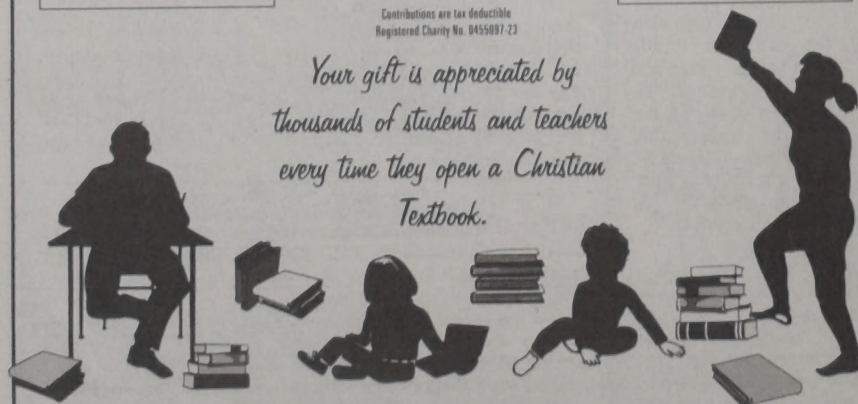


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Bolivians ponder role of faith in politics

LA PAZ, Bolivia (EP) — What role should the evangelical church play in Bolivian politics? That was the topic of discussion at the First National Meeting on Political Ethics and Christian Ethics, sponsored by EPOS (Evangelicals, Politics and Society) Aug. 14-15.

A group of 50 religious leaders issued a number of recommendations, including broad support for women's

participation in political processes, the institutional strengthening of the evangelical church and the creation of a political participation movement that responds to current national challenges.

Pastor Teodocio Perez called for a "party with an evangelical base in order to give an honest response to the crisis and the poverty racking our countries."

Diana was no 'Queen of Hearts': former Anglican Church head

LONDON, England (EP) — Princess Diana was a "false goddess" worshipped by the British people, the *Sunday Times* has quoted Lord Coggan as saying. Coggan, who as Archbishop of Canterbury was head of the Church of England and worldwide Anglican Communion from 1974 to 1980, said the overemphasis on Diana has turned Britain into a godless nation. "Along came this false goddess and filled the gap for a time," said Coggan. "The British people identified with someone who had pretty loose morals and certainly loose sexual morals."

Church

Liberal church groups, evangelicals differ on U.S. missile strikes

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — U.S. missile strikes against terrorist targets in Afghanistan and Tanzania have drawn strong support throughout the U.S. and around the world, including from evangelical Christians, but are being criticized by liberal church groups.

Among those, Church Women United criticized the U.S. for striking back at terrorism. In a statement immediately after the strike, the group said it was "outraged that the Clinton Administration, with the support of congressional leadership, has decided to strike terrorism with terrorism. This tactic is not only in conflict with our Christian values, but it is also practically ineffective."

Church Women United noted that the bombing attacks on U.S. embassies were "similarly deplorable," but blamed them on the U.S., saying the bombings were "a continuation of the downward spiral of violence which the U.S. has engaged in over time throughout the Middle East, most recently with threats to bomb Iraq over non-compliance with U.N. weapons inspections."

The Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, general secretary of the National Council of

Churches, also criticized the U.S. missile strikes, saying, "Military strikes are not a viable long-term solution to our security problems. True peace and security will prevail only when we, along with the international community, address the political, social and economic conditions that breed extremism and terrorism."

Evangelicals supportive

Meanwhile, evangelicals have generally supported the strikes, citing statements by Bin Laden's organization made earlier this year: "We, with God's help, call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it."

Evangelicals point out that Afghanistan's Taliban government has provided a safe haven for Bin Laden and his followers, and that Sudan has clearly stated its sympathies with Islamic extremists. "America incarnates the devil for Muslims," Hassan Turabi, Sudan's Islamic leader, said in an interview last year. "When I say Muslims, I mean all the Muslims in the world."

numerous European and North American bishops for their refusal to see homosexual relations as sinful.

Said Holloway, "I now acknowledge that the word I used in my pain and frustration was ill-judged and hurtful and I hereby unreservedly apologize for using it."

On the morning of *The Times* report, both bishops apparently opened their newspapers at the same time, and Holloway rapidly called down to the conference and issued his apology. At the same time Archbishop Carey opened his newspaper, and in typically British humorous understatement, turned to his wife, Eileen, and said, "I see that Richard disagrees with me again, dear." *The Times* got no word on what Eileen said.

Carey's speech criticized

It is now being reported that Holloway has offered a formal apology, saying the word "pathetic" was referring to Carey's speech to the gathering, and to its impact, not to the archbishop himself.

Carey, who could be termed an evangelical Anglican, believes that Scripture condemns homosexual behavior. He lent support to Third World bishops who vehemently criticized

The plan of God

"In [Christ] we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose [Greek: boule] of his will...."
(Eph. 1:11, NIV)

The idea of the plan of God is a prominent theme in both the Old and the New Testament. From before the foundation of the world, God had a plan and purpose (theological discussions often speak of his "counsel") for his people and his world. It is a plan which he carries out throughout world history, gathering his chosen people and pushing steadily forward, despite demonic and human opposition, to the consummation of all things after Christ's return.

As Christian believers, it is a great comfort to us that we are included, as specially chosen heirs, in that great and irresistible plan of God.

Plan unfolds slowly

Allow me to quote from an article on this theme which appeared in the recently published *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997):

The idea of the etsah [i.e., plan] of God, although mentioned sporadically before the eighth century (e.g., Prov. 19:21) leaps into prominence in the oracles of Isaiah. For Isaiah, history is the execution of God's plan, which manifests itself both in judgment and redemption and is directed to an ultimate goal of cosmic dimensions.

In the words of the German biblical scholar J. Fichtner, "The plan of Yahweh consists in the radical carrying through of the holiness and the clear manifestation of the glory of Yahweh in his people, among the nations, and on earth, i.e., in the realization of his claims to sovereignty."

The theme of God's plan for history pervades the entire book of Isaiah and presents a significant progression in the history of God's revelation concerning himself. Like other prominent themes in Isaiah, it is picked up in the New Testament, in this case especially by means of the Greek boule (Luke 7:30; Acts 4:28; 13:36; 20:27; Heb 6:17), and is specifically related to Jesus Christ and his death on the cross (Acts 2:23; cf. Eph 1:11).

In this way the "counsel of God," meaning God's overall plan or design for all of history, becomes a theme that unites not only Old and New Testament, but also the history of the cos-

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
● Al Wolters

mos from creation to the eschaton."

The theme of God's plan illustrates an important point about the teachings of the Bible. Although this theme is of fundamental importance to biblical religion, its full significance only gradually became clear. It did not become prominent in the Old Testament until the time of Isaiah, and its crucial connection with Jesus Christ did not become clear until the New Testament.

The same can be said for many other basic themes in Scripture, such as the person and work of the Holy Spirit, or the meaning and extent of holiness. The revelation which God gives in the Bible is a *progressive* revelation, and biblical teaching on a given topic must always be understood in terms of the totality of Scripture, as it culminates in the New Testament. It is only in that sense that we can appropriately speak of biblical principles for the church today.

Abiding strength

It is one of the strengths of the Reformed tradition of Bible interpretation that it has always stressed not only the principle of *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), but also that of *tota Scriptura* (Scripture as a whole). Subordinate parts of Scripture should not be isolated from the whole, much less pitted against each other, but they should be understood as integral parts of an organic whole which tells a single, overarching story.

It is in its integrality that the canonical Scriptures provide the church, under the illumination of the Spirit, with the definitive teaching, exhortation and guidance by which it is to live on its journey through history until Christ's return.

It is a great and glorious thing that the plan of God ties all these things together, worldwide and throughout history, and that we may play a privileged part in that cosmic story.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He is the author of the article cited above (NIDOTTE 2.491).

'Pathetic' archbishop maintains sense of humor

CANTERBURY, England (CRNews) — A story in *The [London] Times* during the Lambeth Conference, the recent turbulent gathering of clergy from the worldwide Anglican Communion, said that Scottish Primate Richard Holloway called Archbishop Carey's leadership "pathetic."

Carey's speech criticized

It is now being reported that Holloway has offered a formal apology, saying the word "pathetic" was referring to Carey's speech to the gathering, and to its impact, not to the archbishop himself.

Carey, who could be termed an evangelical Anglican, believes that Scripture condemns homosexual behavior. He lent support to Third World bishops who vehemently criticized



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Personal Experience

A night to remember

Wendy Helleman

I'll never forget Wednesday, March 4, 1998. No, it was not a ballet performance at the Bolshoi Theatre, nor a concert at the grand hall of the Moscow Conservatory. It happened on an ordinary walk from the Okhotny Riad subway station through a small park en route to St. Andrew's church.

It had been such a good day. For the first time in many weeks I had actually taken a whole day to read at a research library not far from our home. If you know that in Moscow books are not lent, but read on site in special reading rooms, and that from the time of ordering it normally takes from two hours to two days to receive them, you will realize how happy I was to have a good stretch of time to do some reading.

For a number of days we had experienced an early spring thaw, finally enjoying some sunshine after months of endless cloud cover. But March can be variable. From day to day, even from hour to hour, one hardly knows what to expect — warm sunshine, melting residual

snow and ice into huge puddles, or blustery winds quickly turning those puddles back to treacherous, icy patches.

Indeed, while reading I could hear the wind rising. From time to time the sun came out, with a welcome warming effect on the room, for the windows were large and it was chilled by the wind gusts. Finally the wind was not just gusting but howling. I knew I should be prepared for a cold walk from the library to St. Andrews, where I intended to attend the evening service.

Slip sliding away

The library closed at six. There was not enough time to go home, just enough to pick up a cup of coffee at the McDonald's on Moscow's main street, Tverskaya, a block north of the Okhotny Riad metro station. Here I had agreed to meet

Adrian, my husband, so that we could proceed on foot together.

It was quite dark already as we made our way beyond McDonald's, between the buildings of the Russian House of Composers and a small

park about two blocks from the church. As we crossed the park we had enough light to recognize a light dusting of snow covering icy patches. Sure enough, just as we were reminding one another of the potential hazards, down I went!

The angle of the ice was my undoing. I remember feeling a shooting pain in my right arm — and discovered that, involuntarily, my right hand had attempted to break the fall. It all happened so fast.

Not completely sure of just what I had done, I was in no hurry to get up. I just felt sore all over and resisted efforts to help get me to my feet. And I felt terribly dirty, no doubt because on the ground I could especially smell all the dirt from dogs, omnipresent in Moscow parks. No "stoop and scoop" for Moscovites! And the winter period when the ground is frozen is a long one. In fact, before I got up, a young girl with a dog approached us and, uncharacteristically, asked what had happened. She offered help, but not before her little dog took a good sniff at this strange obstacle on its path.

Finally I managed to roll over onto my left side, carefully took hold of my sore arm, and got up. Fortunately, the church was not far away. Adrian took over the bags we were carrying, and we arrived without further slipping

and sliding.

At the church a number of people had already gathered for this midweek service. Since we had commitments to people whom we were to meet that evening, I was relieved that we had actually made it. But this sense of relief, along with the warmth of the building, meant that as soon as I sat down I felt myself getting woozy, slipping away. It was so good to be in the company of friends, who soon realized what had happened and started phoning to clinics to see about an x-ray.

Prayer's immediate answer

I was especially grateful for Chad's presence. "So, now it's your turn for some attention!" he said. Well, I had little choice in the matter.

While others were calling (it was after-hours for most of the "expat" clinics, whose ads promise so much!) Chad prayed. And suddenly that out-of-sorts feeling, the sense of everything going wrong, left me, and I felt that even in this misery the Lord was there; we were not left to our own devices.

It gave a new perspective on things. What would we have done had it happened on our way home, for instance? How would we have called for help then? We were with friends who knew a lot more about the Moscow medical scene than we did.

We finally got an answer at the International Clinic; they told us to come over. Another friend, Susan, offered her services, her car and time, and we were off, through the maze of

Moscow streets.

Feeling every pothole

From our more usual routes underground, or on sidewalks and buses, we had never quite discovered how complex it is and how uneven the pavement. Even driving as carefully as possible Susan could not avoid the potholes; my arm registered each and every one. Prospect Mira, the location of the clinic, was not really very distant, but the route was not direct.

The doctor was a Canadian — a pleasant surprise. And a philosopher, at that. But I was not particularly in the mood to discourse on the help of philosophy in such circumstances.

He immediately recognized the break as a "classic" Colle's fracture, but the clinic's x-ray department was already closed. We faced a choice: drive outside Moscow, to a linking hospital for expatriates about an hour away, or visit the nearby large hospital with the busiest emergency wing in Moscow. We would go accompanied by a Russian on staff, supposedly to translate, but especially to make sure sterile needles were used. Given the bumpy ride already experienced we wasted little time in deciding on the latter option.

It was only a five-minute walk, but we rode. First came registration. I do not usually carry my actual passport, and was happy that the photocopy was deemed adequate. Nor did I carry the letter from the university regarding our assignment in the MGU philosophy department — the things one does not think of when leaving home in the morning!

But with less fuss than might have been expected we were shown a waiting area. It was a hallway, really, with just a few benches, and more people to occupy them than space available. They were all ahead of us, as I soon realized.

Some were still wearing city street service suits, one with blood dripping all over the floor, apparently from a wound on his leg. Another woman was doubled over with stomach pains. A few men were pacing the hall, rather intoxicated, talking away in loud staccato voices. I did get a place to sit, and was grateful, since it might be a long wait.

After a half hour of no movement Dr. Rouchenko, who accompanied us from the clinic, went inside one of the rooms.



PHOTOS COURTESY THE HELLEMANS

**St. Andrew's
in winter —
definitely not
Russian looking!**

**At the corner of Leninsky Prospect
and Lomonosovsky Prospect —
closest intersection to our apartment
in Moscow — near the university.**



Soon after that Dr. Rakhymy asked me into a small room. Between snatches of a professional conversation (in Russian) I recognized discussion of a financial arrangement. As in Canada, medical care is supposed to be free, but the system is bankrupt. If an operation is needed it is best to check first whether all necessary equipment is available.

Third World standards

The conditions of the building and equipment reminded us strongly of standards prevalent in the Philippines, where we had lived earlier — neglected, dilapidated largely due to inability to maintain the tradition of public service from the communist period.

The nursing personnel walked around on old sandals, with uniforms that had once been white; and doctors seemed to think nothing of smoking while consulting with patients in the hallways, cigarettes dangling from their lips. To me it appeared incongruous, but Russians seemed to take this in stride. Life is cheap, and violence, no stranger.

After another significant waiting period I was x-rayed, and was taken into the treatment room. Judging from a strong overhead lighting system this had once doubled as an emergency operating room; however, only about half of the bulbs were working, as we discovered when the light was pulled over to illumine my wrist. But first, the needle to inject novocaine right at the break. Itself rather painful, I had thought that it would at least reduce the pain of the next and almost final stage, putting the bones back into place.

Heave and pull

A hefty middle-aged nurse blocked my view of what was being done at this stage; she held my elbow while the doctor pulled for all he was worth.

I thought for sure that I had come apart even further. But in fact, he pulled the bones pretty much back into place, as we saw in a final set of x-rays. And I was not too much overcome with pain to recognize competence, and pride in work well done.

What a relief when the plaster cast was put on. Healing could begin.

It was close to midnight when Susan drove us home, and I got my first chance to try my left hand on interesting challenges like brushing hair and teeth, and

getting in and out of clothes. I was still experiencing considerable pain, so thought little of the warning that I should prepare for the novocaine wearing off.

That night I discovered the reality. For the next few days we kept the ice containers of the freezer well-stocked, and with ice and pain killers tried to reduce the throbbing pain. I had thought that one bad night would do it. But by Friday the pain was just about unbearable, even with ice packs. With Susan's help we went back to the clinic where Dr. Downing gave some relief through minor adjustments to the cast, and prescribed a medication with less caffeine, so at least I could sleep.

But the real culprit and source of the horrific pain was not discovered until the next Thursday when we saw the bone specialist, Dr. Buck, and I was to get a fibreglass cast put on.

The x-ray showed two broken wrist bones still close to being exactly in location and starting to heal. But when the cast came off we discovered that the edge of the first plaster cast had dug into the skin at the base of the thumb. And this sore spot made it quite difficult to get a new cast on properly.

Trying to keep it exposed for healing presented unexpected complications. It took two tries, and I wasn't game for a third after that.

The nurses couldn't seem to co-ordinate their attempts with those of Dr. Buck, and more than a few harsh words were spoken. Fibreglass is still a rarity for casts in Russia; they did not appreciate how quickly

he had to work to mold the cast before it would begin to set.

Long recovery

I had hopes of getting back to fairly normal routines of life and work, even some teaching, by that week. But it was hard to get around on the streets. The weather was still very unpredictable, and the accumulation of snow made it quite challenging, especially with icy sidewalks and treacherous marble-granite stairways for underpasses and entrances to subway stations.

My hand remained quite swollen for a long time. The solution — to keep it raised above my head — interfered with the other problem of the sore at the base of the thumb. No matter how carefully I held the wrist, the cast always seemed to slide over and dig into that spot.

It took a few weeks before I could sleep normally. As a result, the process of healing was not the swiftest. Our colleagues advised me to stay home and wait until the sidewalks were not so icy, especially because I would have the additional handicap of being less balanced.

It was good advice, as I real-

ized after a few attempts. There was enough to read, and I used my time to listen to Russian programs on the radio. With my left hand I could still type and keep in touch on e-mail.

It was great to get feedback from family and our supportive team around the world. And I kept alive professionally through working with a graduate student, Helena, who came to our apartment for help when she realized I would not hold classes at the university for the next few weeks.

Improvement came slowly. After six weeks a third cast was put on, reducing further the pressure on the thumb, and I tried to cut down on pain killers. Easter Sunday, when I was finally able to attend a church service, was also the day we got one last enormous dumping of snow. So it took another week before I resumed classes at the university. Finally, in early May, the cast came off and I had to get serious about exercising those swollen, stiffened fingers. What a job!

Not the end of the story

Two months later, as I write this on July 28, the swelling is almost completely diminished. But without the swelling the

wrist also looked rather crooked, and I was anxious, once back in Canada, to get a second opinion: might it need resetting? Should I have come back to Canada right away to have it set properly? It has taken almost a month before getting an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon.

But it was worth waiting for. Not only did he assure me that the break was not caused by osteoporosis (as had been intimated at first), but he reassured me by saying that Canadian doctors would probably have done no better in setting it. Indeed, the wrist was (only) 90 per cent back in its original position. But minor surgery could take care of the protruding bone.

However, he advised waiting a year to allow inflammation of the tissues to completely reduce. So, although I am still clumsy in handling numerous everyday activities and my fingers are still rather stiff, I am hopeful that physiotherapy will help reduce these problems, and I am so thankful for this outcome.

Dr. Wendy Helleman and her husband, Dr. Adrian Helleman, are Canadians who are currently teaching philosophy at Moscow University in Russia.



This is the little park just behind Moscow City Hall where I fell March 4. In fact, the older lady is walking at almost the very spot where it happened — ouch!

The Spirit never overrides biblical standards

A response to Henk Hart re: the Bible's 'timeless principles'

Al Wolters

Dear Henk,

With some hesitancy, but also with a sense that the time is right, I have accepted Bert Witvoet's invitation to respond to your reflections in the last issue of *Christian Courier* on the Bible and "timeless principles." I do so in the form of a personal letter to you because you and I have been friends and associates for a long time (a full third of a century by now), and there is much about you and your work that I admire and respect. At the same time, you and I have long had strong disagreements about the issues you raise in your article.

"Does 1 John 4:18 mean that New Testament love casts out the Old Testament fear of the Lord?"

I was not present at the conference in Bolton, Ont., on Reformed Institutions in Transition in June, but I was keenly interested in the various reports of it that I have heard and read (see CC, July 3). I was particularly struck by the paragraph in Bert [Witvoet's] report in which he said the following: "Hart said the Bible does not provide us with timeless principles. But 'we should work today with the principles the Spirit gives us.'" I take it that your article in the August 28 CC was in large part your attempt to clarify your position on these matters.

What are 'timeless principles'?

You point out that many Reformed leaders, while affirming that "old formulas don't work forever," are reluctant to endorse your position. The reason for this, as you correctly surmise, is that you hold that not just the Reformed tradition, but the Bible itself fails to provide us with timeless principles.

Now if we define "timeless principles" in a technical philosophical sense, such a claim may well be defensible. But in ordinary language, when we speak of a "timeless principle"

in connection with the Bible, we mean something like "a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine or assumption" (that's how "principle" is defined in my desk dictionary), which is taught in the Bible and holds true for the church of all ages. If that is what you mean when you deny that the Bible provides us with timeless principles, most Christians will disagree with you. I certainly do myself.

There is in fact, a good deal in your article which I would challenge. My concerns are of three kinds: logical, exegetical, and hermeneutical. Let me say a word about each.

A logical lapse

To show that the Bible does not teach timeless principles, you give a series of examples (mostly having to do with the Old Testament law) of how the New Testament moves beyond the Old. I fail to see the logic of this. The fact that there are many subordinate principles which change in the unfolding of biblical revelation does not mean that there are no fundamental principles which remain unchanged.

This is like trying to show that there are no federal laws in Canada or the U.S. by pointing out that there are many provincial/state and municipal laws which are not federal. If you want to convince your readers that the Bible gives us no timeless principles, you will have to deal with what most of your readers probably do regard as timeless principles, for example the sovereignty of God or the centrality of Christ.

Love and fear

Many of my disagreements with you are of an exegetical kind. A case in point is your reading of 1 John 4:18: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." In your view, this text refers to an important change in the Bible, a change from the principle: "Fear God and keep his commandments" (Eccles. 12:13) to the principle: "Love God above all and your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-39).

But I see no change in principle here. In fact, I venture to suggest that both these texts formulate "timeless principles." In any case, the words of Jesus in Matthew do not suggest discontinuity with the Old Testament,



Al Wolters

but the very opposite, since they consist of quotes from Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

Does 1 John 4:18 mean that New Testament love casts out the Old Testament fear of the Lord? Frankly, I find the suggestion preposterous. The Apostle is here speaking of the fear of punishment, as the full text explicitly states. Besides, there are many places in the New Testament which continue to speak of the fear of God in the positive sense of reverence or awe. See, for example, Acts 9:31, which speaks of the early church as "living in the fear of the Lord."

Paul and the law

I also have an exegetical bone to pick with you about the texts in Paul's letters in which "law" is contrasted with freedom and the Spirit. You quote many of these texts, and seem to assume that "law" in these passages always refers to earlier biblical principles, which are now done away with.

This, of course, is a highly debatable assumption. As you know, the Reformed tradition of interpretation has always stressed that "law" in these contexts refers primarily to the legalistic misuse of the law, not to the Old Testament law itself.

In fact, the latter continues to have validity for the Christian church today (the so-called "third use of the law"). That is why the Ten Commandments play such a prominent role in the third section of the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

Your reading of "law" in Paul's letters thus represents a departure from the Reformed

tradition on this matter, as you're aware. As you put it in your article: "Calvinists don't see it Paul's way, though Lutherans do." I myself still feel most comfortable with the Reformed view. My favorite text in this connection is Romans 3:31: "Do we then nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law."

There is a great irony in the fact that you should have come to disagree with traditional Calvinism on this point, since it is precisely Calvinism's positive view of law, in self-conscious opposition to Lutheran and other Christian traditions, which made possible the development of Dooyeweerd's "philosophy of the law-idea," to which you and I both owe so much.

In fact, you emphasize these discontinuities so strongly, that you state: "The most basic things change." But I believe that there is a single plan of God which is being worked out through all these changes, and that the discontinuities have meaning only within the larger and unchanging continuities of God's progressive revelation (e.g., the Covenant, the Kingdom, fellowship, election).

The decisive difference

Finally, let me touch on what I suspect is probably the most decisive difference between you and me in this discussion. For lack of a better term I will call it a hermeneutical difference.

"We are indeed called to reformation, not of biblical principles, but rather to a reformation according to biblical principles."

If I understand you correctly, you see the Spirit-led discontinuities within Scripture as a paradigm for the innovations with respect to Scripture into which the Spirit may lead the church today.

For you there is, in principle, no difference between the new insight given to Peter in Acts 10 regarding the uncleanness of Gentiles, and what you take to be the emerging contemporary insight regarding the validity today of the scriptural teaching on homosexuality.

In both cases we must trust the process whereby the Spirit

guides us into an insight which supersedes previous revelation. You write: "God's Spirit still provides [principles] today when the biblical ones need reformation." In your view, it seems, the Spirit enables the church today to reform the principles which God revealed in the Bible.

My own view is decisively different. I believe that the Bible as a whole (including all the stages of the history of revelation) provides the standard by which our lives should be governed, and that the Spirit never leads the church into any "truth" that supersedes this standard. We are indeed called to reformation, but not to a reformation of biblical principles, but rather to reformation according to biblical principles.

As you know, the issue of the relationship of Word and Spirit has been a very contentious one in the history of Christian reflection. In this case you seem to have chosen to depart not only from the Reformed tradition, but from classical Protestantism as a whole.

In your current thinking, "the guidance of the Spirit" seems to be replacing the Reformation doctrine of *sola Scriptura*. Ironically, your article appears to be an attempt to show that the guidance of the Spirit is a timeless principle taught by the Bible.

Allow me to conclude on a more personal note. I do not question your deep and sincere commitment to Jesus Christ and his Kingdom. There is, in fact, much about your personal piety and lifestyle for which I have a high regard. But I believe that on some significant points you have moved away from the confessional heritage which I cherish, and which continues to define my own thinking on these matters.

I look forward to your response. Where I have misunderstood or misrepresented you, I will gladly be corrected. Let's make it our goal to clarify our respective positions, and to respect each other's Christian integrity.

Dr. Al Wolters is professor of religion and theology/classical languages who teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Amsterville, Ont. In the next two issues of CC, Hart and Wolters will continue their exchange, after which we invite our readers to take part in this important discussion.

Short story

Tough mushroom, tough mother

Jacqueline Ruette-Radke

"Can I have a new dress, Mama?" asked Sylvie. Frugality was a necessity in France in the years after World War II. Twice a year, Sylvie's mother took her and her brother to town to buy clothes.

This time, on the way back, they stopped at the millinery shop for elastic and buttons.

Beige paint peeled off the exterior walls. Inside, and in the long windows, hung precious treasures: needlepoint pictures of scenes of times past, faces, reproductions of paintings by the Old Masters. Buttons of all colors and sizes were pasted on a high stack of drawers that did not close. Ribbons and laces languished on shelves.

Sylvie's blue eyes squinted. She searched for the new, the unknown, in the dimly lit shop. The pictures, the colors, even the acrid smell of dry goods aroused her imagination.

She yearned for the canvas in the window — a pastoral scene of a mauve sky hovered over a church and the red roofs of a village surrounded by woods; a little brook bounced merrily off brown rocks at the edge of the trees.

Sylvie's mother looked big in the store. She chatted with the gray-haired, smooth-faced milliner. Sylvie's hand caressed the blue and red skeins of yarn. Sylvie neared the window and looked towards her mother. Then she returned to her mother.

Sylvie tugged at her Mom's sleeve. "Mom, look," she pointed to the canvas. "See? The little brook." Her voice carried more conviction than a felon repenting.

"Yes, it looks nice."

"May I have it?" She whispered.

"It's too big for you," her mother answered. "Start with a smaller one if you want to needlepoint."

"But I'll finish it. I promise, Mama. It's so beautiful."

The milliner followed the exchange intently.

"What about the birds you are embroidering?" asked her mother. "Did you finish them?"

"No." Mama always found the wrong question to ask. "But I'll finish them too. Oh, please, let me have the picture." She begged with her hands joined in prayer.

"Have you done needlepoint before?" asked the milliner. She stroked Sylvie's ash-blond locks. "It's a pretty picture and you have excellent taste, child. But it is a lot of work."

"It's too much work, Sylvie, and you know it." Her mother faced the old lady.

"Please, Mama let me try it. I know I'll finish it." Her nose tickled, she sniffed. Her knees felt shaky. She tightened her lips. Her moist eyes pleaded.

Her mother looked puzzled. Sylvie studied her face for a clue, saw the hint of a doubt, then a frown.

"I tell you what," her mother said. "Choose a small project. If you finish it you may have the big one for your holidays."

Sylvie sneered. It was like getting stationery when you expected a gold watch.

"But it'll be gone by the time I finish the small one. Someone will buy it and I won't have it." Her last argument fell on deaf ears.

Sylvie pouted for a few seconds, looked at the little brook once more and shuffled to the counter where a variety of small printed canvases were displayed. One bright six-inch square attracted her. A lonely mushroom with white stem and white-dotted red cap stood on a luscious meadow under a cloudless sky.

"So, may I have the mushroom?" Sylvie jerked her head towards her mother.

Her mother nodded. They marched to the drawers harboring the DMC brand cotton spools. Matching colors was thrilling. She tilted her head to see the combined effect of the threads and selected the best hues.

Then the milliner showed Sylvie a tapestry needle, checked the prices off and put everything in a plain paper bag. Sylvie accepted the paper bag as if it were a goldplated jewel.

Not quite what she'd wanted but she would soon finish it. The little brook would soon bounce into her hands. She thanked her mother.

The walk home stretched like taffy. Sylvie's eagerness to start — or rather complete — the mushroom itched her fingers. After dinner she begged her mom to show her how to start. Oh, the first green thread. She soon



realized green covered half the canvas. Tediously Sylvie completed two rows. She counted the remaining ones. Too many. It was time for bed.

The next day, the red cap looked more appealing. If she finished it, the rest would be easy. She threaded a needle with red, stitched around the white dots. The work was slow. She stopped. Her finger hurt from squeezing the needle. Later, she worked on the azure sky. But the blue covered most of the other half of the canvas. In and out went the needle, in and out. She sat near the window for better lighting.

"Sylvie, come and play ball with us!"

"Another time; I want to finish this," she said, brandishing the canvas in the air.

The constant bouncing of the red rubber ball on the wall was more than she could resist. Sylvie dropped the canvas and the needle on the table and ran out. She would continue the next day.

But the next day Sylvie played jump rope after school. The mushroom remained untouched.

School work came and went. Clearly she didn't have

time to do it all, she said to her mom. Her mother nodded. But that evening, Sylvie resisted the temptation to play with her friends. She completed the white mushroom stem.

Days went by. She'd think, occasionally, of the little brook at the milliner's. She'd thread a needle or two. But her heart wasn't in it. Her brother's teasing made her hate the mushroom. If she had the big canvas it'd be finished, for sure, she said to her mother. Her mother smiled.

Why did it take so long? Why did it have all these dots that made her skip stitches? How about a full red cap? It took forever to complete the white dots. Each stitch sacrificed her freedom. Her friends laughed at her.

After four weeks of struggle, she finished the big little fungus. She sighed with relief and ran to the kitchen.

"See, Mama, you didn't think I'd finish it!" She put the mushroom right under her mother's eyes. "See, see?"

"What about the green and the blue, Sylvie?" asked her mother. "It's part of the picture too. Remember our bargain?"

"But I did most of it. Can't you see?" Sylvie threw the mushroom canvas on the countertop. Her mother remained silent. Sylvie snatched the canvas, darted a mean look at her mother and hurried to her room.

"When one starts something one finishes it," said her mother. Then raising her voice, "You'll never do any good if you don't. Start and finish." The voice followed her.

She threw the mushroom, the spools of thread, and herself on the bed. *Why can't I have the little brook?* she moaned to herself.

She stared at the mushroom. Only straight rows of green and blue were left.

Sylvie sat down. She threaded a needle, her thoughts tied in cross stitches, green and blue. She lost her needle and had to go back to the milliner's.

A large sign covered the little brook part of her canvas: SOLD.

Sylvie's heart broke. She braced her voice to ask for a replacement needle. The milliner said nothing.

The days dragged. It got too warm. With the shutters closed in her room, it got too dark; or she'd do it the next day. Her mother's knowing looks enraged Sylvie. She knew she musn't give up. Start and finish. Even if she'd lost the little brook.

With sighs heavy and fingers sore, she completed the sky. Needle in, needle out; snap the thread, pull it through the needle. What an uninteresting green.

Her mother left her alone. Sylvie's resentment built; but so did her determination. Start and finish. Only three rows left. She counted the stitches and stopped halfway. She decided to forget their number and keep needling.

It worked.

The day of the last stitch came, almost as a surprise. But it was Sunday. And the stores were closed on Mondays, too. But it didn't matter any longer.

On Thursday, when school was off, Sylvie's mother gave her money. Maybe Sylvie'd like another canvas, her mother said.

Sylvie ran all the way to the shop. In the window, the little brook was still there.

"I knew you'd be back for it," said the milliner. "So, I saved it for you."

Sylvie selected the color threads, tasting a sweet victory. Now that she thought about it, this tough mushroom had not been so bad after all. Start and finish.

News Comment

Two weeks that were



Bert Hielema

IT HAS BEEN A SAD WEEK for me. First, the sordid spectacle of the church-going, Bible-carrying Bill Clinton debasing the highest political office in the world when he admitted that he had more than skirted the truth in his pursuit of skirts. Then at a party I was saddened to again discover the deep divide there is between heaven-as-haven-dualistic orthodoxy and my view, which I would call more earthly. The next day, still in this down mood, I heard of the unexpected death of our next-door neighbor and friend after a brief illness. But life must go on.

AMIDST ALL THE gloom I did find a good news item. It comes from Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., the university of choice for young people in my area, mainly because it is close, but also because it carries some prestige: it is the place to meet the B.P.s — the Beautiful People, the offspring of the rich and famous in Canada who often have chosen Queen's as their learning destination. Rich men, it seems, frequently marry beautiful women, who in turn produce good-looking kids.

At Queen's one of the hottest courses right now is religious studies. Last year the religion department had to turn away 600 applicants, and when course

enrolments are published this week, the situation will be much the same.

I am puzzled by this. In our church, young people who enroll there or elsewhere mostly drop out of church. I guess that studying religion isn't the same as being religious. Why are they so keen on these courses, I wonder? Some professors think that the coming millennium has something to do with it. Others say that multiculturalism is a factor — that students see the devotion of orthodox Jews or the power of the Koran in the Middle East, or the Amish with their creation-friendly lifestyle, and find this fascinating.

I, of course, have my own opinion about this, and I tie this in with an article I read in the recent issue of *Perspectives*, a journal of Reformed thought. The article was entitled "The Book Seminarists Never Read." The book seminarists and graduates of seminaries never read is the Book of Nature, God's creation, cited in the *Belgic Confession* as one of the two places where we can learn about God. Perhaps — no, not perhaps; most definitely — the church should spend equal time teaching the eager young and bewildered older folk about that "unread" book, which all religions keep on neglecting at their own peril.

SPEAKING OF RELIGION: There are definite advantages in going to church. Attending religious services lowers blood pressure more than tuning into "The Back to God Hour." "People who attended a religious service once a week and prayed or studied the Bible once a day were 40 per cent less likely to have high blood pressure than those who don't. If they relied on TV or radio, it wasn't as beneficial," says David B. Larson of the (American) National Institute for Health Care Research. And it was strongest among people in my age group: between 65 and 74.

"There are two parts to religion. One is personal and one is social," says Larson. "There is something to the social part that is very important and you don't get that sitting on your couch."

ALZHEIMER'S IS OFTEN in the news, also in CC recently in a touching article. I've just run across a couple of news items suggesting some relief and preventive measures. A Dutch study shows that exposure to light may help Alzheimer's sufferers regain sleep-cycle rhythms and reduce the need for institutional care. Patients who daily receive two hours of bright light therapy for a month registered improvements in sleep and body temperature. People with Alzheimer's often suffer from troubled and restless sleep. So lots of light and physical activity are very important, for them and for all of us.

Also taking a simple supplement of folic acid (roughly three cents per tablet) and Vitamin B12 could help prevent or delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease. Of course reading, writing, and keeping the brain busy with puzzles or chess or games prevents the onset of this terrible condition as well. And much television viewing speeds it on.

A TOUCHY SUBJECT. I'm finding, is eating. I keep on discovering items all over outlining the benefits of being a vegetarian. Oops, I did it again: touched on that unholy subject of being a vegetarian. But what I keep on reading must have more than a grain of truth, even though my remarks may cause a beef.

Dieticians keep on saying that the clearest benefit of vegetarianism is a lower average blood cholesterol and, thus, a reduced risk of coronary-artery

disease: heart problems, in other words.

Vegetarians tend to weigh less than non-vegetarians, have fewer digestive-system disorders, and also have a reduced risk of diabetes and gallstones, and are less prone to get colon, breast and lung cancers. So there you have it. Take your pick. If you do eat a fatty meal, use plenty of Vitamins C and E, which help block the harmful effects. These vitamins also are a factor in reducing the influence of sunburns and, thus, melanoma (skin cancer). And here comes one of my risky predictions (I'm sticking my neck out again): I think that just as non-smoking is now accepted as positive behavior, so in a few years being a vegetarian will be seen in that same light, as well.

HER NAME, MONICA, reminds me of two words: money and icon. I'm wondering whether "ica" is the female of "icon," idol. Money is indeed the icon worshipped by many in our age. Whatever Monica Lewinski has suffered emotionally in this totally voluntary relationship, financially she will greatly benefit from her liaison with the man often called the most powerful person in the world. She's been offered \$150,000 for her blue Gap dress. She has already posed in *Vanity Fair*. That's only the start.

MONEY. ALWAYS A fascinating subject. It has plunged the world into the most perilous instability, starting in Japan, then all of Southeast Asia, now Russia and South America. Not so long ago money meant little to most people on the globe, as barter was broadly based.

Now the majority of the world's population are huddled into cities that survive only by virtue of money. If money fails, these people go hungry, because what potatoes were to Ireland in 1840, is money today. If money fails then people in Tokyo, Mexico City, Moscow, Jakarta, Cairo, London, Toronto and New York will starve.

And money is failing. Because currency has been devalued, people already face starvation in Mexico City, Jakarta, Moscow and Bangkok. The next target, now that the ruble has crumbled, is China's yuan. If it falls, it will lead to even more devaluation in Asia and elsewhere. The recent floods there have already affected close to 250 million people, nearly as many as live in the entire U.S.

Thousands have drowned and untold number of acres of land have been inundated. It will most certainly deprive China of its growth target of eight per cent needed to keep an increasingly restless population in check.

Here, too, money is the great destroyer: because of money, woods have been paved, mountains mined, and everywhere seas eaten, species eliminated, people killed and national identities sacrificed. So it is no wonder that terrorism is on the rise.

BOMBS HAVE, TILL now, been terrorism's more simple means. While evil minds planned their attacks in both Ireland and Africa, a conference on this subject was proceeding in a secluded location close to Washington, attended by leading germ-warfare experts, doctors and security officials. Their purpose: to plan measures to counter a much more dreaded danger: the increasing possibility of the use of germs such as anthrax, one of the most deadly poisons.

Recall that in 1995 a group of deranged people, members of the Japanese Supreme Truth Sect, used a nerve gas called sarin in the Tokyo subway. Police later found enough of that stuff to snuff out millions. Groups such as the ultra-right militias in the USA, various sects in Japan, and Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East are undoubtedly all part of the same trend: fanatics who have lost direction and are redoubling their efforts to get what they see as deserved revenge. These people have no other agenda than anarchy, a nihilistic urge to annihilate.

Although we live in volatile times (terrorism, fragile, money-based economies, unpredictable weather, leaders who do not lead), I don't want to end on that pessimistic note, because I know that readers of CC have a higher interest. Historically we are entrenched in this situation. But as long as we see its great danger, pray for wisdom, and rely on our Savior rather than on technology and human redemption, the Lord will be gracious to us and show us the way.

Bert and Dmy Hielema, who live in Tweed, Ont., thank all of you who sent congratulatory cards in connection with their 45th wedding anniversary. "It is good to know that we are part of a larger body," says Bert.

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Comment

Quarterly communion makes for hunger, frustration

Dear Adrian,

Let's talk about how we "celebrate" the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I put "celebrate" in quotes because in my experience the service is usually more funeral than celebrative.

In our tradition I'm convinced we don't know how to deal with symbolism, with anything that isn't surrounded by words explaining what the symbols mean. Mysticism even in its healthiest forms just isn't in our spiritual genes.

Granted, in terms of the Lord's supper we have come a long way. I remember, as a child, those solemn warnings in the long preparatory "form" read the Sunday before the rare communion Sundays. And the lengthy liturgy at communion. And then the service of application afterwards. And the strict quota of four times a year.

Actually, they couldn't have had it much oftener because they would never have gotten around to anything else. In my church now we have communion once a month, which is a big improvement. Personally, I'd be happy to have it every week, though in a somewhat altered form with room for some variety.

Communion... is still very meaningful to me, precisely because it speaks to my senses — "touch, taste, see." I am tired of all the words.

I made profession of faith when I was 17. I didn't have a "conversion experience." What I had was the sudden discovery, prompted I am sure by the Holy Spirit, of a profound hunger to take communion. And it is still very meaningful to me, precisely because it speaks to my senses — "touch, taste, see." I am tired of all the words.

I have good friends among the Catholics and the Anglicans. I'm always intrigued by how they value the sacrament. They may not always have all the t's crossed and i's dotted doctrinally, but they experience the sacrament as a very personal and deeply strengthening connection to Christ. In times of crisis, they will go to communion every day.

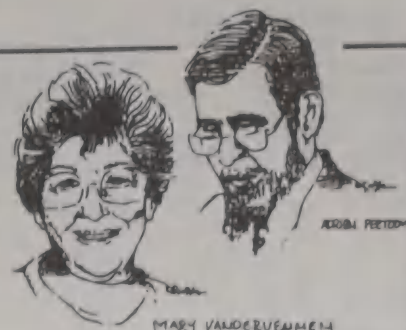
Furthermore, I am tired of passively sitting in the pew being served. I'd plead for going forward to the table, hearing words addressed to me and to each one personally by the celebrant while the rest of the congregation sings — lustily. And I would plead for some songs of triumph. And I would plead for the freedom at appropriate times, after extended communal prayer, for example, or on a council retreat, to celebrate communion together without all the formality of a church service.

Don't give me the arguments against this. I know them. "It will become too common." "We might defile the Lord's table if it isn't properly supervised," etc. etc.

We rightly complain about spiritual darkness and secularism all around us. So why do we keep ourselves on starvation rations in terms of communion?

*Frustrated and hungry,
Mary*

Two
—over—
60



Dear Mary,

I must honestly admit that I'm not quite as "frustrated and hungry" as you seem to be (personality? different experience?) As for offering "arguments against" what you suggest, be it far from me. Some time ago I concluded that most of the "arguments" I've had to deal with in the Reformed community can easily change over time and are *not* grounded in Scripture. They may be valuable in circumstances, but then only if our emotions also testify to their soundness. Thrust-wise, I'm with you, I'm with you.

So let me respond not with arguments but with a story out of my own experience. In the 1970s we lived in Burnaby, B.C. My job as salesperson for an educational publishing house had brought me in contact with an amazing educator; a Franciscan nun whose job it was to consult with and advise Catholic elementary schools in the Vancouver diocese. Along with a small number of other nuns she lived in a convent called The House of Wilderness. (No, no high walls — simply a substantial bungalow.)

In the course of our work we got to know each other well. One day she invited me to bring my family to visit this "House of Wilderness." I asked if I could also bring my best friend's family, and she readily agreed. So on Saturday afternoon we four adults and 10 children entered this place. We got a tour of the kitchen where Sister Cook was busy baking bread. In the chapel we prayed for their (then) sick Oma. We admired the dining room and library. And then we sat in the lounge for some tea, cookies and talk.

On arrival we had handed Sister Francine a large bottle of red wine, a gift which had been gratefully received and been spirited away (pun intended!). It wasn't meant to be drunk by us that afternoon. But after the tea and cookies Sister Cook came in with the bottle, glasses, and a large loaf of fresh white bread, still warm and exuding a heavenly fragrance.

The wine was poured, but the bread left intact. Then Sister Francine asked one of us adults to give thanks to God for these gifts, while we all stood in a circle holding hands — children, Catholic nuns, Reformed adults. After that, still in the circle, we were invited to pass along the loaf of bread, break off a piece and eat it. The adults drank their wine, and for the children there were glasses of juice (I forget which, and which color). Nobody talked, but all partook.

Nobody said it was communion. Not the Catholic nuns, who would probably have been reprimanded had they told their superiors that it had been, and in what forms. Not the Reformed adults, who would have been uptight enough to deny that it had been, given the theologies we then embraced and the fact that our children (the youngest a toddler!) ate and drank also.

What made it communion? Our feelings at that moment. The way our thoughts sought Jesus. The place at which we ate and drank. The fellowship we enjoyed, shaped as it was by faith, distinct in forms and words perhaps, but united in Christ. The bread and wine (juice).

I'm telling you it was communion! "Don't give me any arguments against this. I know them. It was 'too common.' If you call this 'the Lord's Table' you may have 'defiled' it, for it wasn't 'properly supervised,' etc., etc."

Mary, I'm telling you, if you had been there you would have known the truth, for you, too, would have walked in it — with great joy. About that I have no doubt.

*Aglow with the memories,
Adrian*

Classifieds

Classified Rates	Anniversaries		Anniversaries	Obituaries
(Revised February 1, 1995) Births \$25.00 Marriages & Engagements \$40.00 Anniversaries \$45.00 2-column anniversaries \$90.00 Obituaries \$45.00 Notes of thanks \$35.00 Birthdays \$40.00 All other one-column classified advertisements: \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00. Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge. Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive ATTENTION! a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.. b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original. d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.) NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address. Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313 E-mail: ccadverts@aol.com	 Happy 35th Anniversary JOAN and WICHER SCHOEMAKER September 3, 1998 Love, your family.		 Voorburg Jordan 1958 September 11 1998 Wedding text: Psalm 121 Our parents and grandparents, GEURT and IRMA VANDENDOOL (SEBOK) are celebrating 40 years of marriage We thank God for his guiding presence over these years and for blessing us with wonderful parents and grandparents. It is our prayer that the Lord will bless them with many more happy years together. Love from your children and grandchildren: James & Caron — Barrie, Ont. Danielle, David Brian & Terri — St. Catharines, Ont. Brandon, Michael Mark & Gina — St. Catharines, Ont. Anana, Adam Rob — St. Catharines, Ont. Mailing address: P.O. Box 367, Jordan Station, ON L0R 1S0	1920 - 1998 We are saddened by the sudden passing of our wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother JOHANNA (DOUMA) DYKSTRA on Aug. 23, 1998. Johanna Douma was born in Anjum, Fr. the Neth., on Dec. 28, 1920. She married Siebe Dykstra on Sept. 28, 1942, and together they immigrated to Winnipeg in June 1947. Johanna is sorely missed by her husband, and is remembered with love and respect by her 10 children: Sophie & Bruce — Winnipeg, Man. Bodie & Heather — St. Anne, Man. Jeannie & Ben — Selkirk, Man. Marie & Jim — Oromocto, N.B. Hilda & Harry — Brampton, Ont. Linda & Bill — New Westminster, B.C. Joanne & Joe — Cochrane, Alta. Grace & Wally — Winnipeg, Man. Jeff & Pam — Lethbridge, Alta. Lil & Clarence — Brandon, Man. She is also missed by her 42 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. Johanna was predeceased by two sons-in-law, John Vanderhooft in 1986, and Alan Poole in 1996. Johanna's focus and joy in life was to care for her husband and family and to see them flourish. To her family and friends, her daily life was an expression of her wholehearted Christian faith. In her last days Johanna was encouraged by the words of Psalm 121: "Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." Her husband and family draw comfort from the fact that the truth of these words was evident in her passing from this life. Correspondence address: 163 Grandview St., Winnipeg, MB R2G 0L4
	Marriages	Anniversaries	Obituaries	
	 DE JONG/WATT: Stan and Corrie de Jong of St. Catharines, Ont., and Mary Watt of Gravenhurst, Ont., are glad to announce the wedding of their children WYNNE JENNIFER DE JONG and JOHN DONALD WATT They speak their vows before God and His people on Saturday, Sept. 26, 1998, at 11 a.m., in Grace Church-on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Road, Toronto, Ont. "Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore" (Ps. 105:4). Address: 600 Lonsdale Rd., #1, Toronto, ON M5P 1R7	Oakville Brampton Ont. Ont. 1963 September 4 1998 We are thankful to God our Father for his faithfulness to our parents! That together they can celebrate 35 years of marriage is truly a gift from God! JACOBUS and HANNIE BEUNK (PETRI) "The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life, the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore" (Ps. 121:7,8). As we reflect on your many years together, through times of joy and struggle, by God's grace, this verse has proven to be a banner over your lives. Both of you have shown us and many others that each day is a gift from God. <i>If we but trust in God to guide us, we find He's always there beside us.</i> We thank God for you both and pray that He will continue to bless you. Andrew & Kim Beunk — Hamilton, Ont. Colleen, Andrea An open house will be held in their honor on Sept. 19, 1998, D.V., at the Clarkson Chr. Ref. Church, 1880 Lakeshore Rd. W., Mississauga, Ont., from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Home address: Holland Christian Homes, Hope Tower 307, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7	God took home our brother-in-law and uncle MARTINUS J. KALISVAART on June 28, 1998, in his 88 th year. He was the beloved husband of our sister Marigje A. Kalisvaart (nee de Ruiter), who went before him in December 1996. He was one of the founders of Zion Chr. Ref. Church in Oshawa, Ont. He is survived by three sisters, Alice Nieuwland of Oshawa and Co Moerman and Martine Kwaadsteniet, both of the Netherlands. Then on July 7, 1998, at Aylmer, Ont., God also took home our sister, sister-in-law and aunt, ADRIANA M. (JEAN) KRYGSMAN (nee DE RUITER) in her 84 th year. She was predeceased by her husband, Cornelis, in 1982, her son Pieter in 1939, and daughter, Irene, in 1991. She is survived by four children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Also survived by her brother Jo de Ruiter, sisters-in-law, A. de Ruiter Offerman and M. Krygman, all of the Netherlands. They will be fondly remembered by many nieces and nephews in the Netherlands, Canada, and U.S.A. Correspondence address: Styntje Markus (nee de Ruiter) and Art Markus, R.R. #4, Bradford, ON L3Z 2A6	On Aug. 20, 1998, our Lord suddenly called home our dear son-in-law and brother-in-law JOHN (JELLE) POSTHUMUS at the age of 70 years. Beloved husband of Margaret, and dear father to five children and their spouses and loving grandfather of nine grandchildren. May the Lord comfort and sustain them in this time of sadness and continue to strengthen them also with Margaret's struggle with cancer. "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). We mourn his passing and he will be missed by all. Lovingly remembered by: Mrs. P. Klooster — Aylmer John & Winnie Steenbergen — Aylmer John & Corrie Klooster — Belmont Jack & Liz Klooster — Kitchener and all the nieces and nephews. Correspondence address: Margaret Posthumus, 57 Forest St., Aylmer, ON N5H 1A5
Miscellaneous	Personal			
CLINTON, ONTARIO ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES available 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info, call (519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.	ONE TO ANOTHER Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue \$5. Write to: #12 923 2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7			

Classifieds

Obituaries

Family and friends gathered at the memorial service for

EDWARD TOP

who passed on to glory on Aug. 13, 1998, five days short of his 91st birthday.

We grieved the loss of a father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother and friend.

But, we also remembered Dad's way of life, his trust in his Lord, loving all who came to visit, his witty comments, his eagerness to hear about church life and life in general. We cherish his memory.

Rev. P. Van Egmond comforted us with the words "In my Father's house are many rooms."

Predeceased by his wife, Sylvia in 1995, a daughter (1947) and a grandson (1969).

Loving father, grandfather and great-grandfather of:

John & Hennie Top — Brampton
Hilda & Eno Jansma — Cobble Hills, B.C.

Tina & Tony Alblas — Brockville, Ont.
11 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

Dear brother-in-law of Melle Haan, Willem and Aske Braam, Trinie and Piet Tysma.

Also missed by his nieces and nephews.

Correspondence address:
100 County Court Blvd., PH.2,
Brampton, ON L6W 3X1

Miscellaneous

Christian Festival Concert Roy Thomson Hall

Friday, November 6

by the Ontario Christian Music Assembly
and guests Lisette Emmink, soprano,
Sander van Marion and Andre Knevel, organ and piano,
under the direction of
Leendert Koolij

Tickets: \$24/\$20/\$14

Order from: Ontario Christian Music Assembly
90 Topcliff Ave., Downsview, ON M3N 1L8

Call (416) 636-9779 for tickets or info.

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A full-time position is available on a dairy and cash crop farm in Eastern Ontario. Applicants must have prior experience and a responsible and gentle attitude when working around cattle and farm machinery. A house can be made available. Preference given to married man. Please send application and resume by fax to:
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37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

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Residential construction company requires two team players to assist in the framing of new homes. Those with experience are preferred but anyone with the ability to work hard and learn quickly in a team environment will be considered. Please contact: Mark at (519) 821-3497 or fax resume to (519) 821-1297.

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Write:

The Back to God Hour
P.O. Box 5070
Burlington, ON
L7R 3Y8

Job Opportunities

First Chr. Ref. Church of Barrie, Ont., is pleased to invite applications for the following positions:

Music Director

This part-time position (approx. 15 hours per week) requires a motivated, competent musician who can organize and provide leadership through music in worship. The ideal candidate will demonstrate a clear understanding and commitment to the Reformed view of worship, its rich heritage in music, and be able to incorporate the best of current musical offerings into services meaningfully.

Youth Director

This part-time position (approx. 25 hours per week) requires a person who has a clear sense of calling to minister to youth. The ideal candidate will be involved in church education, pastoral care for young people, program development and implementation, and the administration of the church where it relates to youth and youth programs.

* Both the Music Director and Youth Director will be encouraged to seek continued training to maintain and increase confidence and effectiveness.

* These positions will be considered separately or in combination.

* An information package including complete job descriptions is available upon request.

* Application deadline is October 15, 1998.

Please forward resumes and/or inquiries to:

First Christian Reformed Church

Box 875, Barrie, ON L4M 4Y6

Attention: Caron Goodreau

(705) 734-9166 office/(705) 734-3785 fax

While all resumes will be carefully reviewed, only potential candidates will be contacted for an interview.

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Vision Statement: *Reformed Faith Witness* is a Christian ministry committed to communicate biblical perspectives on current and world events in accordance with Reformed traditions.

Please consider making a financial gift for 1998. All contributions will be used to help **Christian Courier** and the cause of Reformed Christian journalism. Send your cheque and complete the accompanying coupon and we will issue an official receipt. Thank you very much!

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

General Manager Building Construction

Maple Building Services, a division of the **Maple-Reinders Group**, is active in the greater Toronto area in serving commerce and industry with general construction services. The projects vary in size from \$1,000 to \$500,000 including work of all trades.

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Applicants are invited to submit resumes to:

Albert Grin, Vice-President, 201 County Court Blvd., Suite 600, Brampton, ON L6W 4L2

Job Opportunities

Redeemer Christian High School (Ottawa)
is seeking a

PRINCIPAL

Redeemer Chr. High School, located in Canada's beautiful capital, is seeking a teaching principal for its 120 students in grades 9-OAC, effective August 1999.

We are looking for a leader and motivator of people, with experience in a growing Christian high school. Strong relationship-building skills are necessary to nurture a staff of 10 full-time and part-time teachers, and an interdenominational student body. We are looking for someone with a strong vision for the progressive development of the only Christian high school in the Ottawa region.

Our one-year-old campus offers tremendous room for expansion of our programs and growth in our student population. Compensation will be based on an administrative factor, a generous benefits and professional development package and a personal retirement savings program.

Please send a letter of application by **Sept. 30, 1998**, along with your resume and a statement of vision of Christian education to:

Cora Beking, RCHS Search Committee Chair, R.R. #1, Oxford Station, ON K0G 1T0.

Phone: (613) 258-5396. E-mail: beking_jc@msn.com

Miscellaneous

Christian Reformed Church

Call declined:

— Second CRC, Sarnia, Ont.
Candidate Leonard Kuyvenhoven (who accepted the call to Ridgewood, N.J.).

— **Rev. Jake Kuipers** of First CRC, Sarnia, Ont., to Immanuel CRC, Hamilton, Ont.

Worship time change:

— The morning services at **Maple Ridge CRC**, Maple Ridge, B.C., will now begin at 9:15 and 11:00 a.m.

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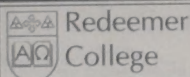
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F.J. Reinders, P.Eng., Chairman
Maple-Reinders Group

201 County Court Blvd., Brampton, ON L6W 4L2
Fax: (905) 457-2498

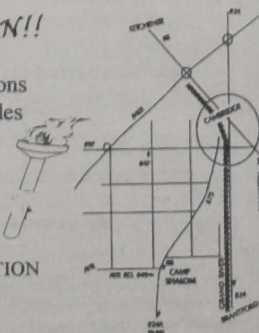
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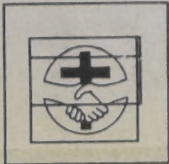

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Classifieds

Miscellaneous	Events	Events
<p>MS FACT #11</p> <p>Twice as many women as men develop multiple sclerosis.</p> <p>Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada</p> <p>1-800-268-7582</p>	<p>College and University Students</p> <p>Join us when you are in Guelph, Ont.</p> <p>New Life Chr. Ref. Church invites you to their worship service and a welcoming lunch afterwards on Sept. 13, 1998, 10:30 a.m., 400 Victoria Rd. N., Guelph, Ont.</p> <p>Immanuel Christian Fellowship Join us in our weekly meetings at 5:30 p.m., in University Centre room 332 starting Sept. 16.</p> <p>Huron Campus Ministry offers excellent programs on campus. Contact: Rev. Ed Den Haan (519) 824-4120, ext. 2392 edenhaan@uoguelph.ca</p> <p>Through God's Spirit, we grow together in Christ.</p> 	<p>HURON CAMPUS MINISTRY OF WATERLOO Classis Huron</p> <p>The Church in the Woods Waterloo Christian Reformed Church warmly invites all Waterloo area students, their parents and friends, to a Student Welcome Service Sunday, Sept. 13, 1998, at 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>After the service, information about Huron Campus Ministry, Grace Chr. Fellowship at the University of Waterloo and the Wilfrid Laurier Group will be presented and an excellent luncheon provided.</p> <p>Please contact Chaplain Graham E. Morbey at (519) 886-1474 or (519) 884-1970, ext. 2739 for further information and assistance. The Waterloo Christian Reformed Church is located at 209 Bearinger Road, Waterloo, Ont.</p>
<p>EH JJ SHOW Christian TV Entertainment</p> <p>Times: Vision TV Cable Network Thursday mornings 6:30 a.m. ET & PT 7:30 a.m. MT & AT</p> <p>Also CJIL-TV (The Miracle Channel) Lethbridge, Alberta 9:30 a.m. and a repeat in evening Sponsored by Voortman Cookies Web page: www.ehjshow.com</p> 	<p>University and College Students arriving in London, Ont.</p> <p>You are invited to a special worship service to welcome new and returning students at First Chr. Ref. Church, 513 Talbot St., London, Ont., at 11 a.m., on Sunday, Sept. 13, 1998. Refreshments and introduction to student activities to follow.</p> <p>The first meeting of the Cornerstone Student Fellowship will take place on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 1998, at 511 Coombs Ave., London, Ont. Please come!</p> <p>For more information, call Chaplain Michael Veeneman at (519) 438-1242.</p>	<p>Anniversary Convention 1998 of the Canadian Federation of Christian Reformed Women</p> <p>"Great is God's Faithfulness"</p> <p>Speaker: Rev. J. Kuntz, Brampton Musical Contributions: Redeemer Choir and students Place: Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario Date: October 7, 1998 Time: 11 o'clock (note change of time) Price: \$20 per ticket</p> <p>To order tickets (till Sept. 25, 1998) send stamped self-addressed envelope with cheque payable (only) to: CONVENTION - 1998, P.O. Box 335, Grimsby, ON L3M 4H8</p>
<p>PRAISE & WORSHIP CONFERENCE with <i>Colleen & Grace</i></p> <p>Ancaster Christian Reformed Church on Saturday, September 19, 1998 from 11:30 - 9:00 p.m.</p> <p>The Public is welcome for a concluding Praise & Worship program beginning at 7:00 pm!</p> <p>To register & for more information please call C. Mulder, (905) 679-2296</p>		

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

- Sept. 6** Immanuel CRC, Cornwall, Ont. celebrates the 30th anniversary of the ordination of Rev. Allan C. Groen with a special 10 a.m. service, followed by a potluck supper. Info.: (613) 933-3053. (#)
- Sept. 8** Special Convocation and Service of Celebration, 8 p.m., Redeemer College Auditorium, Ancaster, Ont. The public is most welcome! Info.: (905) 648-2131. (#)
- to Sept. 11** A major 15-yr. retrospective art exhibition by George Langbroek. At the Rodman Hall Arts Centre, 109 St. Paul Cr., St. Catharines, Ont. Info.: (905) 684-2925.
- Sept. 14** 35th Anniversary Celebration, Brantford Chr. School, 7 Calvin St., Brantford, Ont. From 9:00 - 9:45 a.m. Everyone welcome! (#)
- Sept. 19** Camp Shalom's 21st Annual Fall Fair, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., at Camp Shalom, on Hwy. 24A. north of Paris, Ont. Info.: (519) 623-4860. (#)
- Sept. 19** Praise & Worship Conference, 11:30 a.m. - 4 p.m., led by Colleen and Grace, at the Chr. Ref. Church, Ancaster, Ont. Sponsored by the Ancaster CRC. \$10 registration (in advance, please). Public praise and worship at 7 p.m. open to all. Info.: Corrie Mulder at (905) 679-2296 or the church. (#)

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Going to Brock University?

Stop by and say hello to the CRC chaplain, Peter Schuurman. He is located at Campus Ministries, Decew Residence 202, phone extension 3134, (home 684-4389, e-mail pschuurm@spartan.ac.brocku.ca). If you need help getting settled or are interested in getting involved in campus ministries, give him a call. Check out the Bible studies, book studies, prayer groups and cost suppers!

News

You and me ... and injustice in Nicaragua

Fred Van Geest

After visiting Nicaragua, and seeing first-hand the injustices perpetrated on workers in the so-called "free-zone sweatshops" (see Nicaragua story on page one of this issue), I ask myself: What is the Christian response to such a horribly unjust situation? To what degree are we actually responsible for what goes on in these *maquilas*?

These are not easy questions. After all, unemployed Nicaraguans are lined up to work in this free trade zone, the wages the workers make are above average for Nicaragua. And the workers themselves do not want North Americans to organize boycotts of companies. They would lose their jobs from a boycott and be even worse off.

My own view is that in order for there to be true justice, the discussion must move beyond ensuring a minimum wage that lets workers provide for the basic necessities.

There is a more fundamental issue here, and that is the idea that workers ought to receive a

fair share of the final selling price for the value they add to the product. If a company does well, all the workers in the company ought to have a share in that financial success. But, this is an issue much broader than sweatshops.

Alternative methods

The second question is even more basic: to what degree are we as North Americans responsible for, or share some guilt for, the exploitation and oppression in places like Nicaragua? I would suggest several ways in which we are complicit, if not guilty.

The first has to do with awareness, knowledge and concern. We are not sufficiently concerned or knowledgeable about sweatshop issues. At the very least, we must pay more attention to where the products we buy come from, and show some concern over how they were produced.

It is encouraging that there are alternative consumer practices developing. For instance, there are cooperatives that make

sure that they obtain their goods from companies that have produced them in a human and just way. For example, Equal Exchange (<http://www.equalexchange.com/fair.html>) is an organization that helps North Americans purchase coffee that is produced fairly (great tasting coffee too). We need to investigate such alternatives further.

There is also a movement afoot to establish an international anti-sweatshop code of practice. Such a code might lead to "labor-friendly" labels, much like "green" or organically grown labels.

Is free trade fair?

The second way in which I would suggest we are complicit is in our uncritical acceptance of post-Cold War economic policy. With the end of communism and the ascent of capitalism and democracy (however tenuous and thin) throughout the world, I think we have become less critical of the way in which capitalism is practiced in much of the world.

Neither free trade and foreign

investment are inherently bad (and they seem here to stay in any case), but they must include labor and environmental protection standards. Free trade should be fair and just trade, not the sort of trade that exploits, or the sort of investment that has no social responsibility.

There are all kinds of other things that can be done. Writing letters to companies to inquire about where and how they obtain merchandise would be helpful. A good place to begin is to ask the company if it has a policy on sweatshops.

We should also cultivate greater skepticism of low priced clothes and other products that may be produced with sweatshop labor. Making use of alternative cooperatives is always a great idea, as is inquiring if the organization you work for has a procurement policy that takes account of how and where products are produced.

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Children of the dump

Fred Van Geest

I'd like to tell you a story about some children in Nicaragua, only a short airplane ride away from most places in North America. The setting is the city dump in Managua, the capital city. On any given day, there are about 500 children who wander through the dump, maybe a thousand kids over the course of a week. Some of these actually live with their families in the dump, in the most decrepit conditions you can imagine.

I walked through the dump and what I saw revolted me. It was all I could do to keep from throwing up. The garbage was familiar, evidence of a consumer society much like ours in North America, packages with labels from companies located throughout North America.

The dump was an environmental nightmare, situated right on a large lake, and actually being bulldozed out further into the lake, extending the shoreline further out.

Several plumes of smoke spiraled up as mounds of garbage were burned, most certainly with toxic fumes being released. Vultures circled about, a large number of them pecking away at the carcass of a dog that appeared to have been recently



The city dump of Managua, Nicaragua's capital.

dropped off there. Cows wandered about the dump, grazing on garbage and grass, inhaling the toxic clouds of smoke, awaiting the day they would be butchered for their probably toxic flesh.

Is there anything else?

In the middle of this scene which seemed like one from a post-nuclear holocaust were all these children. There is no official recycling program in Nicaragua, and so little children wander through the dump collecting glass, plastic, and anything else of value for recycling.

These children did not look healthy. Many seemed to have

problems breathing. Most walked and even ran through the dump on bare feet, oblivious to the syringes and other medical waste lying about. One little boy we met was delighted to find a pair of discarded slippers, which he intended to resell.

These child scavengers were not alone. There were, of course, the dogs, the vultures, the cows — and the garbage workers. But at the edge of the dump there were also the buyers of the recyclables. Or were they their employers? Their masters?

As sad as this was, it was even sadder to know that since these children were working in the dump six days a week, simply

to survive, they could not attend school and would likely grow up illiterate and unable to contribute to society in any other significant way.

We talked to some of these children. Some of them looked dirty and sad, and old beyond their years. But others looked relatively unconcerned, and intent on doing their work. It was almost as if they didn't know that a better life might exist somewhere. But then again, were they to walk outside the dump and into the streets of Nicaragua, there would be few signs that life could be better: in the streets there are more children, begging for money, trying to sell a candy bar, a bag of water, a shoe shine, or anything to earn a few pennies for their street bosses in an attempt to find the next meal.

Children who live in the streets and in the dump are part of "globalization" today. The spread of democracy and capitalism is meaningless and perhaps harmful for these people. The stories of these children remind us of the ugly side of globalization, a side which often goes unreported or unnoticed in this fast paced, rapidly changing world.

News Digest

Mozart makes rats smarter

WASHINGTON — Rats that have listened to Mozart sonatas since before birth learn faster than other rats, report University of Wisconsin researchers. Their findings reinforce studies that indicate certain types of classical music, played to human babies before and after birth, can make them more intelligent, according to *Reuters*.

Unfortunately for Philip Glass fans, recordings of his minimalist music did not help the rats.

Frances Rauscher and her colleagues played Mozart, "white noise" or Glass's compositions to pregnant rats and their babies for two months after birth. They then trained the rats to run a maze in search of a food reward.

"The rats exposed to the Mozart completed the maze more rapidly and with fewer errors than the rats assigned to the other groups," the researchers wrote in the journal *Neurological Research*.

"This suggests that repeated exposure to complex music induces improved spatial-temporal learning in rats, resembling results found in humans." Spatial abilities are quite marked in people gifted in math, music or science, the researchers noted.

Supermom dies

CHILE — A woman who once held the world record for having the most children has died. Chilean television reported in August, Leontina Espinosa died of an ulcer. She had 57 children and 100 grandchildren, according to the *Toronto Star*.

Whiz kid advisor

KINGSTON, Jamaica — Jamaica has appointed a 13-year-old whiz kid as a government advisor to help bureaucrats keep up with the latest in computer technology.

"You could call me an expert," says Makonnen Blake Hannah, who was named youth technology consultant recently at the opening ceremony of a computer institute. The institute will be run by his mother, Barbara Blake Hannah. She is a journalist and former senator.

The centre, with equipment donated by Microsoft, will train gifted children aged six to 18, reports *Reuters*.